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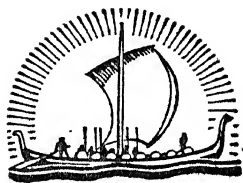


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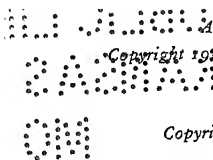
# FOR ALL MANKIND

*By* Leon Blum

TRANSLATED BY W. PICKLES



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 *A l'Echelle Humaine*  
Copyright 1945 by Librairie Gallimard, Paris  
*For All Mankind*  
Copyright 1946 by Léon Blum

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# TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

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MO

WHEN THIS BOOK first appeared, it was like a voice from the dead, for it was published in French in the early months of 1945, while the author and his wife were still prisoners in Germany. Although it was known that the physical conditions of their captivity were better than might have been feared, all their friends knew only too well that Léon Blum and Madame Blum were being kept alive solely to allow their captors to use them as hostages when occasion arose. Chance and German miscalculation sent that plan astray, and Léon Blum returned to France in May 1945 to find his book in print. The manuscript had been smuggled out of prison early in 1942 and preserved by faithful friends during the remaining two years of German occupation. Parts of it, if I am not mistaken, had appeared anonymously in the underground *Populaire* as early as 1943, and after the liberation of Paris the whole was seen through the press by Blum's old friend, the G.O.M. of French Socialism and France's greatest authority

on Marxism, Bracke, who under his real name of A. M. Desrousseaux is also one of France's greatest Hellenic scholars.

Here is the Preface that Bracke wrote for the first edition:

As you take up this book, try to bear in mind that the author finished writing it in December 1941. Then, whatever you feel about the author, whether you like him or not, you will not fail to recognize that the observations and conclusions you find here are those of a lucid and penetrating mind. As you follow the argument, your mind will go back to the point of time at which Léon Blum turned to look at his country's immediate past, at the degradation of the conqueror's "armistice," and to consider what was to be France's future road and her goal. Try to imagine Léon Blum, in the solitude of his successive prisons, gathering together his memories, sorting them out, questioning them, putting his thoughts into ordered and written form at Bourrasol, revising and rounding them off in the snow-covered fortress of Pourtalet. Do that, and you will not misunderstand if you meet, here and there, an expression that displeases you, a statement that you would have made more cautiously or would have qualified in the light of what you have learned from the events of 1942, 1943, and 1944. This is 1941, seen through the eyes of a prisoner of Vichy and of Hitlerite Germany, before that Riom Trial of which ultimately even the pretense was abandoned.

It was, of course, intended that the book should be printed as soon as it was possible. A few people read it in typescript. Now it is available to all, exactly as it was written. Not a word has been altered, not even where prudence or experience suggested that this or that should be added or cut out. It bears the imprint of no mind other than that of Léon Blum, and so is entitled to fair

consideration on its merits alone. The reader who refuses it that consideration will himself be the loser.

Those who can look back on the changing impressions, on the many different phases of France's great ordeal, who can avoid confusing July 1940 with August 1939, and the last months of 1943 with the spring of 1942, will admire the limpid certainty of judgment that enabled Blum to see future events in the shadows they cast before them.

What is most striking about this book? Is it the respect for truth, so patently shown by a man who analyzes the errors and weaknesses of his own party, but sees the behavior of others only in terms of what conditions and explains it? Is it the perspicacity that could look behind the picture of a Russia made vulnerable by isolation, to see and almost to predict the acts that placed her on the common road of an expanding human freedom? Or is it the confident serenity which never doubted even in the darkest hours that the Russian Army would rise again to contribute to the final defeat of Fascism everywhere—which, indeed, never doubted the international shape of the ultimate victory?

Whatever the answer to that question, the reader will find only encouragement to work with the author for the achievement of that tremendous task whose scope and goal he measured and traced within his prison walls.

BRACKE

(*A. M. Desrousseaux*)

It was in these words, then, that Bracke reminded his readers of the date at which *A l'Echelle Humaine* had been written. The reminder was intended, in some sort, as an apology for what might otherwise appear to be lapses from historical

accuracy. In fact, to the reader who remembers that the book was written during the blackest period of the war, Léon Blum's serene confidence, explicit and implicit, in allied victory, his belief in what one may call, with literal accuracy, the *moral* certainty of that victory, will seem to call for anything but apology. What, on the other hand, may appear to require explanation to the reader not familiar with French history, or who has not been able to follow events in France during the war, are some of the allusions in the first four chapters. The American reader will find much to profit him in this book, but he may well wonder—brought up, as he has been, under an unchallenged democratic tradition—why it should be considered necessary to devote so much time and space to a defense of the abstract principles of democracy. To him, then, in particular, a word of explanation. France is a country in which for one hundred and fifty years no single political system has been taken for granted, as constitutional monarchy and the parliamentary system have for so long been taken for granted in England. An absolute monarchy up to 1789, for two years France tried, and failed, to feel her way toward constitutional monarchy. After that, in succession, and leaving out the intermediary forms, France was Republic, dictatorship, Empire, semi-constitutional monarchy, Republic, dictatorship again, Empire again, and finally Republic for the third time. It is true that when the latest of the world wars broke out the Third Republic was nearly seventy years old, but it is

equally true that its constitution had been written by monarchists, for their own purposes, and that its existence had been threatened at least twice in those seventy years, the second time as late as 1934, when Paris saw the beginnings of a Fascist *coup d'état*. That is the much simplified constitutional history of one hundred and fifty years, and it is important to readers of this book because it means that Léon Blum had to address himself to a people whose minds had never been allowed to accustom themselves to the idea of democracy. They lived in a Republic, whose motto was "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," but there were always people around them urging that other systems and other mottoes were better.

At the actual point of time at which Blum wrote, all this antidemocratic propaganda had suddenly found new fields of action. The military collapse of 1940, with all the so-often described and still indescribable material and mental confusion that followed upon it, had been seized upon by the enemies of both the Republic and democracy in a way that was too painfully familiar to the Frenchmen for whom Léon Blum wrote.

The men who made up the government, the administration, and the press and propaganda machine of Vichy, were, politically speaking, a motley crew. They included Fascists, monarchists, authoritarians of other brands, Syndicalists, pacifists, ex-Socialist internationalists who really believed in Hitler's "New Order," as well as the usual complement of careerists and opportunists. They had in common a dislike,

temporary or permanent, of democracy, and they found themselves faced with a population in whom sudden, unexpected, and overwhelming defeat had bred despair; despair, both of their country and of its political system.

Almost immediately this numbed and stunned population was drenched with propaganda—defeatist, antidemocratic, and antirepublican. The defeatest propaganda was stupid and self-destroying—"Every day I say to myself, 'we have been defeated,'" proclaimed Pétain in one of his speeches, and this inverted and perverted Couéism, which was typical, did much to promote disgust with Vichy. But the other two forms of propaganda were more skillfully done. The name of the Republic itself was abolished, and France became "the French State," "*l'Etat Français*"; its motto was no longer "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," but "Labor, Family, Fatherland," and so on. The important thing here is the precise meaning of "and so on." The men of Vichy were too intelligent to try to go the whole way at one step. French experience of democracy was too deep-rooted after one hundred and fifty years for it to be possible to overthrow it at a blow. So the Vichy counterrevolutionaries left much of the framework for the time being. Parliament, the trade unions, Municipal Councils, were never formally abolished. More important still, many of the men and much of the argument remained unchanged—and that, indeed, is what, for a time, made Vichyism seem more dangerous in France than Nazism, with its new and unknown ideas

preached by new and unknown men, had seemed in Germany. Well-known Socialists (or recent ex-Socialists) like Déat, Spinasse, Lafaye; Syndicalists like Lagardelle; Trade Unionists like Belin, Dumoulin, Vigne, and dozens of others whom one could name in each of these groups—to say nothing of the many prominent Radical politicals supporting Vichy—had a familiar democratic and even a working-class audience ready and waiting for them, and they were careful to use arguments already in part familiar. Every democrat had heard criticisms of this or that weakness of the constitution or the parliamentary procedure of the Third Republic—of the excessive grip of the elector in nonpolitical matters, of the relative weakness of the executive, of the absence of party organization. It was all too easy to slip out of these familiar ruts into criticism of democracy as a whole, and the cleverest among them did it with great skill. In the same way, every Socialist and some of the Radicals were familiar with criticism of narrow nationalisms, customs barriers, competing standards of living; and the ingenuity with which a Déat or a Dumoulin, for instance, could enlarge these themes into pleas for Hitler's new "European Order" was worthy of a better cause. Propaganda for the "National Revolution," which was to be Vichy's positive contribution, was more difficult, because nobody in the Vichy team agreed with anybody else, as Léon Blum points out, but this had not always been as evident as it was soon to become.

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The whole had much more than a passing success, and it was to combat all its dangers, particularly in the minds of young people, that Léon Blum sat down in his icy prison cell in those dark days of 1941 to write this book. Since then the victory that he anticipated with so much confidence has done much of his work for him. Just as defeat made Frenchmen doubt the value of democracy, so victory helped to bring back their faith. Léon Blum, indeed, says as much, in a new Preface—a Preface that in the circumstances is almost an epilogue—written originally for the first German translation of the book. Here it is:

The first edition of this book appeared early in April 1945 in Paris. It was preceded, as it is here, by an introduction by an old and dear friend, Bracke-Desrousseaux, who read the proofs and consented to present the work to the public on behalf of his absent friend.

For I was, indeed, still absent, and doubly so; I was both a prisoner and outside France. At the beginning of April 1945 my wife and I had just left the Buchenwald concentration camp, in which we had been interned for two years. We were finally freed only at the beginning of May, after five weeks of wild wandering across the center and south of the greater Reich. Yet it was not in a German prison that I wrote *For All Mankind* but in one of my French prisons. I began it in Bourrasol, near Riom, in February 1941 and had almost finished it by July, when I learned of the murder of my friend Marx Dormoy. The emotions that the news aroused in me were so strong that they interrupted my work for long weeks. Then came my transfer from Bourrasol to the fortress

of Pourtalet, the announcement of my coming appearance before the "Supreme Court" of Riom, work on my defense, return to Riom, the trial itself. Finally it was almost the spring of 1942 before I could put the finishing touches to the last part.

The reader will understand, as soon as he begins to read, the kind of preoccupation that led me to undertake this task. Although living under prison conditions, and on the whole severe prison conditions, I was not entirely cut off from reports from the world outside. I saw that the disasters of 1940, thoroughly exploited by Vichy propaganda, had led a considerable proportion of French opinion to lose faith in democratic ideals. I realized that the infection had spread to great numbers of young people, including some of the best among them. It was these young people that I had in mind as my audience when I decided to write this book. It was, in other words, as a defense of democracy that I saw it, and as a defense that could be effective only if it was sincere. It could justify the hopes I expressed for democracy only if it had the courage to admit also democracy's faults.

Since then democracy has provided its own justification by its victory. The dictatorships have collapsed in blood and ruin. For the whole French people the hypocrisy and servility of Vichy are now only memories whose shame they would prefer to forget. Democracy, therefore, no longer needs an advocate; indeed, its greatest difficulty is to choose among its friends and defend itself against their excessive zeal. And so, in the four and one-half years that have elapsed between the conception of this book and the writing of this brief introduction, both the facts of the present and the visions of the future have shifted, and, in honesty, I owe it to the reader to warn him of it.

And yet I have no great fear that my reflections may appear inap-

propriate or out-of-date. I hope it is not too great a presumption to believe that they remain interesting as glimpses of the past and important as comments on the present. That, at any rate, was my own impression as a reader, when I first saw it in print on my return to France, and I was, I think, an impartial reader, for my memories of it were of the vaguest, and I judged it, page by page, as if it were somebody else's work. It is true, of course, that I found in it passages that I would not write today or that I would write differently, and others that I would like to strengthen with new arguments. But in general and on balance, I remain faithful to my former views. I regret nothing of what I wrote and—more important—I withdraw none of it. I merely ask the reader, if here and there he finds a page that shocks him, to keep a little in mind the date at which I was writing. In particular, I ask him to make friendly allowance for the duty I had imposed upon myself of being sincere about others and severe toward myself.

L. B.

So much for the time, the place, and the circumstances in which this book was written. They have gone out of date, and yet—and this is the justification for the presentation of a work of this kind in another language—the book gains from this very out-of-dateness. From an *œuvre de circonstance*, with the severely limited purpose of correcting the views on some points of current politics of some of the men and women of one country, it becomes a treatise on democracy itself, readable and ponderable with equal profit everywhere.

One comment on the translation. In general, and by agreement with Léon Blum, I have tried to keep both the author's

slightly old-fashioned style and his extreme accuracy of thought, but where I have been compelled to choose between mere verbal accuracy and the accurate rendering of an idea, I have, of course, chosen the latter. Two words, however, which occur frequently in *A l'Echelle Humaine*, present serious difficulties to the translator. The words "*bourgeois*" and "*bourgeoisie*" have been taken over into English from French with the meaning, roughly, of "middle class." In French they have, in addition to this sociological connotation, a political and an economic one, equivalent respectively to something like "non-Socialist" and "capitalist," and where one of these meanings was clearly intended I have given it the appropriate English equivalent. There are, however, a great many occasions on which every French political writer uses these words with a mixture of two or more of the three meanings, without himself being clear as to their precise semantic content. This is normal and inevitable but is a nuisance to the translator. Where it seems to have happened here, I have simply left "bourgeois" and "bourgeoisie," and trust to the reader, after this warning, to supply the rest of the meaning for himself.

W. P.



## FOREWORD

AT THE END of the last war I wrote a little book addressed to young people and, in particular, to my son. To-day my son is nearly forty and is a prisoner of war in Germany. I know enough of his intellectual integrity and his strength of character to be sure that neither he nor his companions in captivity are in need of advice or comfort. But there are other young men, as young as he was then, adolescents who are growing up away from home or whose fathers are away from home in some prison camp, and these are searching in vain among the ruins of the past for some certainty, for a rule of life, a faith; they are trying vainly to lift the curtain of the future in the hope that they may find behind it some consolatory gleam, some guiding star. Do they not need someone to turn to them and offer help? Is it not the duty of men upon whom life has thrust its accumulated experience to try on their behalf to think honestly and to offer them an honest analysis of the first precepts of wisdom and

the first principles of action, and to do so in no spirit of presumption, as an elder, but in affectionate solicitude for their welfare? That is primarily what I have set out to do in the following pages, written in prison. I am still in prison and have no idea how they will reach any of the unknown readers who have inspired them and whose attentive faces I can picture round me. But I do know that one day they will reach them. It is quite possible to speak and write from within prison walls. Indeed, in a warmhearted country like our own, the voice that comes from prison carries further and one finds more ready listeners. Bolts and bars have not separated me from France. My heart beats in tune with hers; with every breath I draw, I share her hopes and feel her suffering, and my solitude serves, I hope, only to give my reflections more weight and more independence.

No one knows better than I that my generation failed in its task. Yet I do not propose to defend it, but rather to try to point out to the rising generation—and to those to whom we shall pass on our burdens tomorrow—what can be learned from our mistakes, our illusions, and our misfortunes. That lesson will be of more use to others than to us. That was, at least, the hope that led me to put down on paper the fruit of my solitary reflections. I wanted, above all, to put young people, and adults as well, on their guard against a feeling in which there is perhaps presumption as well as discouragement.

France today is faced, not with a vacuum, but with an inter-

regnum. Not everything has been destroyed, not everything needs to be rebuilt. Defeat revealed the collapse of our military machine and the bankruptcy of our ruling class; it discredited in men's minds the political system which that class had created in its own image; it destroyed human lives and wealth. But it did not destroy France's people, her soil, her nature, all the complex of traditions, convictions, and aspirations that we call today the spirit of France. Seen from the angle of our military power, the war is, no doubt, over for us; but in terms of our national existence it goes on. France is not yet beaten; her fate is not yet sealed while the war is fought on elsewhere, without her, but on her behalf. I believe that it is not unreasonable to hope that she may yet emerge from it independent, intact, with her moral stature perhaps increased, in a Europe once more free and at peace.

FOR ALL MANKIND



## CHAPTER ONE

NO CRISIS in a people's history leaves the previous equilibrium undisturbed. That is why a crisis is always something of a revolution, whatever its material consequences may be. At the end of a long war, victory, like defeat, changes everything.

France learned this from her own experience twenty years ago. All the normal bonds of affection, habit, or interest are broken, sometimes permanently. Families are bereaved or dispersed, whole populations are uprooted or transplanted. Occupation, wealth, conditions, and the ordinary human contacts of life are subjected to sudden change. Fears, suffering, and anxiety of every kind prepare the way for feelings essentially religious, either in form or in content, for disturbing reflections on the destiny of the individual, of the nation, of humanity. The value attached by every individual to his own life, which in normal times is fairly constant, changes with equal suddenness, falling or rising according to whether the shock

produces a spirit of self-sacrifice or simply develops egoism and fear. Lastly, all the great crises of history seem to drive into retirement, or even into premature decline, those generations, already decimated, which have played a direct part in them. One or two old men may be kept as mascots or idols—as were Thiers and Clemenceau—though they too are soon thrown on the scrap heap, but for the rest, the storm has always cleared the way for youth. Racing ahead of the normal rate of inheritance or transmission of authority, youth feels itself no longer merely destined to future responsibility, but suddenly and unexpectedly burdened with it now. It becomes in consequence both flattered and hesitant. Everyone who is capable of casting his mind back twenty years will agree that this picture is, in essence, true.

But when war has ended in defeat, and when sudden and total defeat has brought with it humiliation and despair, then a different type of collective feeling appears—a feeling that is probably as old as human society itself, so old certainly that its primitive elements can be found in ancient religions, and especially in Jewish prophecy. When they had lost a battle, the ancient Greeks tried to decide by what negligence they had alienated the protection of their patron deity, and the Jewish people accused themselves, through the voice of their prophets, of having violated their treaty of alliance with the God of Battles. The instinct of a people leads them to believe in justice. When they have been injured, they need to believe

that they have not been wrongly injured, and they examine their own hearts to discover the guilt within them. And so, from the beginnings of time, national calamities have been linked with the idea of sin or guilt, and hence with their natural consequences—contrition, expiation, redemption.

Nations, like men, are always tempted to believe that what happens to them and affects their existence has never happened before or to others. It is true that there are few precedents in history for so deliberate and complacent a cultivation of the idea of sin and redemption as the effort we are witnessing in France today, or for the vitiation of the idea by a mania for self-flagellation carried almost to the point of perversion. Nor has the idea ever before been exploited with greater subtlety or dishonesty. But it is also true that the world knows no older belief, and that this belief is the most ancient of illusions. For it is absurd to suppose that history follows the elementary rules of retributive justice. A national catastrophe must inevitably have its causes, but it does not follow that the causes are sin and guilt. If defeat be the deserved punishment of error, ignorance, or vice, then we must believe too that victory is the legitimate reward of wisdom, merit, and virtue. Even those who believe that human affairs are ruled by some providential plan never see it in such simple terms. The ways of God seem to them less direct, more remote, less easily penetrable. Where will you find a people whose changing destinies can reasonably be attributed to the

alternate workings of reward and punishment? In 1914 France was victorious. Was she then less frivolous, more moral, more pious than the France of 1939? To what virtues must be attributed the victories of Hitler and Mussolini? To what vices the defeat of Belgium, Holland, and Norway?

It is time we stopped beating our breasts so noisily; time we called a halt to this mortification and self-denunciation—or rather to these denunciations of others—for these stern judgments are usually accompanied by a remarkable complacency, not to say a deliberate blindness. The condemnation of a whole people should have as its basis and condition a vigorous self-examination. Yet in fact those who are most arrogantly generous in their dealing out of collective vituperations and maledictions are careful not to begin with a confession of their own sins, a *mea culpa* of their own. But let us not pursue that. What is true and natural is that a nation after a great defeat, like a man after a great failure or a great sorrow, should take conscience as its mirror, look closely and fearlessly into it, and check over meticulously all that it finds there. It is proper too that the self-examination should be severe, and that it should lead perhaps to stern self-criticism, but not that its course should be determined in advance by prior admission of personal unworthiness, of a fall from grace. We are in the wrong when we have recognized and understood our own error, not merely because events have proved us wrong. Those are the principles by which we

should examine and pronounce judgment on ourselves. The rule of equity applies just as much in this case as when we judge others.

When a whole nation is shaken by catastrophe, the first instinct of its people—first because it is simplest—is to accuse what is nearest to hand: their responsible leaders, their political system, their institutions. It often happens that this reflex movement is sound. The guilt for Waterloo and the capture of Paris was quite properly attributed to Napoleon, that for Sedan and Metz to the Second Empire, and in the same way, after their own recent disaster, some sections of public opinion denounced the Republic and its leaders. That the movement this time was by no means general, and still less spontaneous, is immaterial. What matters is that it did undoubtedly become both deeper and more widespread precisely because of this century-old instinctive trend. But it went far beyond merely placing responsibility for the catastrophe on the country's political system or its recent leaders; it refused to stop at the mere constitution and personnel of the Republic, but went on to accuse in addition the whole complex structure of public life, its form and its content. The net of accusation was cast wide enough to bring in everything that for a century and a half had given life to political doctrine and habit as well as to institutions. Let us not mince words: what was attempted, in addition to a political revolution, was no less

than a counterrevolution in social relations and civic obligations. Responsibility for defeat was laid at the door not only of the Republic but of democracy, of the idea of individual liberty, of the principle of the natural equality of all citizens. The seminal conceptions, the motivating ideas which from the time of the Revolution we had thought of as the foundation of society, ideas that even the Monarchist Charter of 1814 and the Imperial Constitution had recognized and proclaimed, had, it seemed, been reduced to dust by the shock of the armies of Hitler. To deny them or to ignore them is not enough; we are assured that they have been destroyed, reduced to nothing, by some *reductio ad absurdum* or some evidential proof, and we are invited to look upon their ruin and mock them.

I am aware that exponents of this view make much play of their intention to build afresh from amid the chaos, but I shall waste no time on these attempts at reconstruction even though they be dignified with the name of National Revolution. Their first inherent vice is their precariousness; they are condemned in advance to survive neither the increasingly probable defeat of Hitler, nor even his final victory. The second is their self-contradiction. The fumbling craftsmen who have taken upon themselves this task of reconstruction are perpetually torn between two patently contradictory concepts—between a return to French traditions and customs of an earlier time and mere imitation of the totalitarian systems built up from nothing by German Nazism and Italian Fascism. The feelings that

lie behind these two concepts have in common the proof they offer of the routine thinking, the unimaginative minds, the intellectual poverty of their authors, but beyond that they are in total contradiction with each other. The desire to return to old French traditions is the mark of an overweening nationalistic infatuation with everything that is or was French, while the urge to imitate the totalitarian regimes is evidence rather of a spirit of national self-abasement, of submission to the conqueror, of servility. The two may converge in their common desire to destroy republican France, but there is neither compatibility nor possibility of compromise between them when they turn to the task of construction. There is no comparison possible between monarchist France, imbued throughout with abstract and sentimental beliefs and governed by a king who represented in his own person a whole hierarchy of classes, guilds, and privileges, and the sinister autocracies in which idolatrous worship of one man has taken the place of religious faith or principle, where the bloody caprices of human brutality have replaced the ordered majesty of force, and the storied structure of individuals and groups is reduced to a dead level of fanatical servitude. The totalitarian dictatorships, selecting among the fruits of modern civilization only the material achievements of progress, would drive our European societies back into a period of history much more remote than monarchy as we knew it. They go back through the centuries of history to the legends of barbarian kings and elemental

tribal rites. Moreover, besides refusing to mix with each other, these two concepts are both in themselves among the emptiest of intellectual aberrations. Prerevolutionary France cannot be restored. We can honor the dead, find inspiration in their example, but we cannot resuscitate them. A tradition may persist in men's minds, but none can mold present reality into dead forms. Or, to recall a phrase of Jaurès, its flame can be kept burning, but its dead ashes can never be revived. And if we turn to the other concept, what reason is there to believe that the edifices built by Hitler or Mussolini will prove more durable than those of Napoleon? How can we give a European basis to structures that are bound up with the lives of their founders even in their own countries? Scattered elements may survive, but the whole, the essential portion, will not. The truth is that two thousand years of history cannot be reduced to nothing in a decade, for human progress has its own irresistible force. Nothing established by violence and maintained by force, nothing that degrades humanity and is based on contempt for human personality, can endure.

There is no need to insist further on these too evident truths. The constructive work that we are shown or promised is cankered from the start. What is required today is an examination and judgment of the work of destruction. I have said that it satisfies an atavistic instinct, and I am not surprised to find that it has proved attractive to much of our youth. I have not yet forgotten the days when I too was

young. Youth is enthusiastic, logical, uncompromising; it condemns as easily as it admires. To demolish everything existing and then to throw onto the dust heap materials still good, or made useless only by the demolition, to clear the ground for a new world made in the image and to the measure of youth—these are projects that must prove tempting.

Is it true, then, that everything in the world of yesterday was false, mediocre, or bad? Let me appeal to the young people to hesitate a moment and to answer me one question, and one only, before they take up the pick. Do you want peace? Do you hate war? If it be admitted that war is not the worst of all evils for a people—for there are times when a nation, like an individual, can save its life only by risking it, and life is not the supreme good for a people any more than for the individual—would you agree that for humanity in general it *is* the worst of all afflictions? Do you agree that without certainty of peace there can be no security for man's labor, nor for his personal happiness, no continuity of progress, no satisfaction of the higher needs of the human soul? Do you accept, as the noblest of man's tasks, the abolition of even the possibility of war from the new world to be built? If the answer is "Yes"—and I believe it is—then it is not true that everything is deserving of wholesale condemnation in the France of yesterday, in democratic France, in the France of the Third Republic, and you would be wise to hesitate a moment before you destroy indiscriminately everything that made up politi-

cal, moral, and social life. The France of yesterday had at least one virtue: that in general—unanimously even—she wanted peace and was ready for and adapted to peace.

Carry your self-examination a little further. Do you honestly believe that a European war would have been possible if all the countries of Europe had had a political and social system like our own so much despised regime? Suppose the political system of Germany and Italy had been modeled on our own unhappy democracy, which men denounce today with such arrogant scorn, would not the peace of Europe have been stable and durable? It is true, of course, that the European system contained many absurdities and many iniquities, although, after all, the Europe remolded by the Treaty of Versailles was less absurd and less iniquitous than at any other known moment of its history. But if all the countries of Europe had had our wretched regime, the difficulties would have been resolved little by little by amicable negotiation, or rather they would have disappeared slowly under the gently healing hand of time. Ask yourselves exactly when, and under what impulse, the possibility of war appeared once more in Europe. Is it not clear that it was precisely when Hitler seized power, and under the impulsion of Hitlerian race theories? On the very eve of that event, with democracy as its guiding spirit, Europe was organizing for peace. General disarmament was no mere chimera, but a real hope. The risk of war grew in

Europe as the despotic power of Hitler grew in Germany. It could not have been otherwise; tyrannies are by nature aggressive, just as democracy is pacific. At the very time at which I write, President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill have just published their eight-point Charter of the peace which the Anglo-Saxon democracies propose to set up after the defeat of Hitler. To this the official spokesmen of the French government have replied with mocking contempt, "This is an old story. The eight points of Roosevelt and Churchill are the fourteen points of President Wilson. Twenty-five years ago this pose of high-minded frankness may have taken people in; today we have learned to our cost what it means, and we know that it offers no assurance of peace and justice." What in fact we know is that the failure of the League of Nations after the last war was the result, first, of the spirit of embittered and mistrustful suspicion in which it was conceived and born; second, of the refusal of the United States to join; and last—and most important—of the appearance in Europe of dictatorial parties and regimes. Who would dare to affirm, who could have dared to hope, that it would finally have failed if the task had been taken up again, boldly and frankly, and with the wholehearted participation of the United States, in a Europe purged of the dictatorships?

Dictatorship and war, democracy and peace—these, then, are the inevitable concomitants. If you do not deny this—and you dare not—you have no right to throw democracy so

casually onto the scrap heap. You have no right to condemn out of hand, as tainted with error and fraud, the work of the men who have been trying for one hundred and fifty years to establish it in the world. You have one right and one duty only: to seek to know why our effort failed in order the better to carry it on after us.

You will reply, no doubt, that your generation has no intention of wasting time on the Utopian schemes to which you attribute some of our misfortunes. Indeed, I understand the reflex that was, for so many of you, the first product of defeat. Along with a general disgust at all present reality, you felt a need for reflection, for withdrawal into yourself, that you then extended from yourself to your country. You want to isolate France as penitents or the sick are isolated. You think of her as needing a period of retreat, of prolonged and deep self-examination, a withdrawal to a convent or a sanatorium. In what remains of the war, you think, France no longer has any duties and almost no interests. Henceforward she must take part in European affairs only insofar as is absolutely necessary to her continued material existence. Above all, she must watch over herself, nurse herself, find new inspiration and new strength, and when she is strong again, we shall see. You were not the first to recommend that line of conduct to a defeated nation. Fichte spoke in the same way; so did Stein in the Prussia that survived Jena and Tilsit; that was, in the main, the theme of Nazi propaganda in Germany

after Versailles, it was the attitude of Thiers, and still more of Gambetta, after the Treaty of Frankfort. But what do you intend to do with the France you have rebuilt in her solitude? How is she to use her strength, once it has been recovered? For revenge, always dreamed of in secret, but never mentioned openly? Do you want France to be strong so that she can profit fully from what opportunities may be offered by the immanent justice of history—or perhaps even seek to provoke them? In that case, revenge will call for more revenge, and from war to war and from generation to generation—to quote Jaurès once more—the poisoned cup of the Atridae will be passed eternally backward and forward between the nations of the earth. Is this, then, the future that you imagine? I do not believe it, and if it is peace you want, then it is no use trying to compress and accumulate your country's strength, like superheated steam in a boiler. On the contrary, it must spread and expand, it must be used to promote the free co-operation of all peoples, to organize them in equality and fraternity so that "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" becomes your international watchword. Proclaim it then, today, after defeat, as we did, a little more deservingly twenty years ago, after victory, and then, whether you know it or not, you will find yourself following once more in the footsteps of the republicans and democrats whom you disowned with such scathing vehemence only a little while ago.

I have tried to use only one argument in my demonstration

of the absurdity, indeed of the impossibility, of this attitude of blind condemnation and indiscriminate rejection. I could have found many more; I chose what seemed the weightiest, the least resistible. I hope that none will be surprised at the use I made of the idea and the very name of peace, at a time when we are passing through the most terrible phase of the war, when, indeed, whether we like it or not, we are playing our part in its atrocities. A good German enjoys the accounts of a night's bombing on London, and for our part we applaud when our newspapers tell us of the tragic end of the *Bismarck*, sinking with all hands. When we read in an eastern front communiqué that a "division has been destroyed," we make no attempt to imagine the reality that lies behind these words, though it would sicken us if we could see it, and we do no more than express satisfaction or dismay, according as the division annihilated is on our side or the enemy's. Passion has stifled all human feeling, as it did among the spectators at the Circus in Rome. But shall we stay after the war in the state to which, in spite of ourselves, war has brought us? If war did not leave us at least with a determination never again to accept it as inevitable, we should have to despair of the human race. Our resolve may prove fruitless; we may still fail in our purpose, as we have once before, but it is unthinkable that the resolution should not be made; it is, as it were, obligatory on us. If we did not accept it in complete sincerity, and in complete honesty, if, instead, we acquiesced in the adage, as old as war

itself, according to which war is eternal, then we should have no right to talk of building a new world, and the future would become as futile as the present.

I cannot refrain at this point from commenting on one of the peculiarities of these times, though it is perhaps peculiar only in appearance. The men, the parties, the newspapers that preached and made profession of extreme nationalism and distorted to their own uses that grand word "patriotism" all called loudly for the armistice and applauded the capitulation. Today they all advocate collaboration with the conqueror, or, more accurately, with the enemy. And yet during the early months of the war, when almost all Frenchmen looked forward to slow but certain victory, these same people were anxious to lay down in advance peace terms of inflexible harshness. Many wanted to put an end, once and for all, not only to Hitler and his gang, but to the millions of men, women, and children that make up the human reality behind the term "Germany." They demanded not only that Germany should be kept under supervision, but that she be dismembered and large portions of her territory annexed to France, and they were ever ready to accuse Socialists and democrats of lack of patriotism because they asked of victory no other fruit than a "new order" in which the mutual co-operation of peoples would be the guarantee of peace. Today they worship the force that yesterday they were prepared to misuse, and tomorrow they will repeat their crimes. In a

France once more free and strong, they will become nationalist and jingo again. They will begin all over again their attacks on the treachery of "pacifists," who refuse to abandon the idea of founding a peace based on human liberty and the fraternal equality of nations; and the men whom they denounced yesterday and will denounce again tomorrow as "pacifists" are those whom today they describe as "warmongers." For there is another side in this apparent contradiction. The pacifists of yesterday and tomorrow are calling today for a wholehearted and unrelenting struggle for the independence of France precisely because they see peace as a compact freely entered into by free peoples. They disavow the armistice that handed France over to Hitler and risked handing over Europe along with her. They repudiate a collaboration which to the Germans means only the exploitation of the whole of French resources in the interests of Germany and the German war machine, while for France it inevitably means servility and abdication, a hypocritical betrayal following on the cynical betrayal of the separate armistice, and offering not the slightest guarantee that the victor, to whom perjury has become second nature, will in any way modify the rigor of his demands when the day of the final peace settlement comes. Even when they were trying desperately, and in all too short a time, to rebuild the military strength that the jingo nationalists had allowed to fall into ruin, even when France had been forced back onto the

arbitrage of war by the despotic ambition of Hitler, and they exhorted her people to persist in the struggle to the limit of their strength, they remained in fact consistent with their past selves and true to their former teachings. They were still the champions of peace. They had gone into the war only to preserve the conditions of any peace worthy of the name, and peace remained their one war aim. I believe that if the young people to whom this book is chiefly addressed will look into their consciences, they must agree that these men and women were right and doubly right.



## CHAPTER TWO

**I**N THE preceding chapter I referred in passing to a historical precedent which merits closer examination, for in the list of our great military defeats the disaster of 1870 precedes immediately the disaster of 1940. It struck France at a time when, even more than in 1940, she was hypnotized by her conviction of her own strength, for in those days the Napoleonic legend was still a living influence in France, and there were few in the country, even among the opponents of the Empire, in whose eyes the invincibility of the French Army was not one of the laws of nature. The collapse too was even more violent. A month after the fighting began the Emperor capitulated at Sedan with our last army but one, the last being encircled in Metz, where it too soon surrendered. In 1940 military collapse led to political change. The difference between 1870 and 1940 is that in the former case the revolution took place openly, as a manifestation of the sovereign will of the people, and that the new republican government was formed, not to

plead for an armistice despite the annihilation of the Emperor's armies, but to continue the war at all costs, by an appeal to French patriotism for a *levée en masse*. There were those, however, then, as in 1940, who believed secretly in immediate peace, peace at any price, and saw in Gambetta, the inspirer and hero of national resistance, only a dangerous lunatic.

It was natural that the political system overthrown by the victory of Prussia should be regarded as responsible for the country's defeat. I have said, and I believe, that the verdict was a just one. For five or six years prior to the defeat a series of almost incredible blunders—Poland, Denmark, Mexico, the Prusso-Italian alliance, Luxembourg, the Rome expedition—had locked France inside an ever narrowing circle, from which, inevitably, only failure of a new adventure could free her. And yet, at the last moment, a stroke of luck, of the kind he was not entitled to hope for, offered the Emperor an honorable and peaceful way out—which he refused to take. The kind of fatal fascination that seems inherent in autocracies drove him on into headlong attack on an opponent whose strength he had no right to underestimate, especially after Sadowa. The first incidents of the campaign had made scandalously clear not only the inadequacy of our armament but the complete lack of competence, order, or any kind of technical preparation. To what inherent vices of the regime were these fatal weaknesses to be attributed? Even before Sadowa, all contemporary critics gave the same reply. The

vices of the imperial regime were personal power, the concentration of every kind of authority in the hands of one man to whom everybody else was in principle responsible, while he was in fact responsible to nobody; the suppression of all forms of parliamentary supervision, of all free discussion by the press and public opinion, the secrecy that marked the conduct of all home and foreign affairs, which had descended to the level of cabinet intrigues. Such was the general diagnosis, and after an unhappy peace, which nevertheless left a mourning nation with its honor intact, agreement on the remedy was no less general. In this respect, the royalists, including even the legitimist branch, were in no way different from the republicans; all agreed that what the country needed first of all was liberty, freedom of speech and of the press, a government working in public and responsible to the elected representatives of the country. In other words, what is the remedy today was the evil yesterday, and what is now the evil was then the remedy.

There were writers, nevertheless, who did not stop at this immediate conclusion, but tried to probe deeper into the reality of the national crisis. Their examination of the problem was the more anxious in that the defeat was scarcely complete before it was followed by a more terrifying upheaval, the revolutionary Commune of Paris, and so their probing went deeper than the political institutions of the state, to the moral consti-

tution of society. If the organs of government had become vitiated, had not the mind and the will of the individuals and groups that make up the nation become cankered too? Renan, Taine, and a few others made up the elite of the group that thought in this way. The book published by Renan after the war and the Commune was called *La réforme intellectuelle et morale*—Intellectual and Moral Reform. France had allowed herself to slip into a state of intellectual and moral decline, of which the military defeat and the revolutionary movement that followed it were both the expression and the penalty. The decline could, of course, be regarded as being itself in a sense a consequence of the autocratic regime, but it had also developed its own consequences and required a separate treatment, without which "national renovation" would remain a superficial and empty achievement. It had shown itself in many ways; in frivolity—not to be confused with gaiety, which is an authentic feature of French temperament—in presumptuousness, lack of serious study of serious things, lack of honesty and scrupulousness in public affairs, in greed for money and greed for pleasure, in the spreading love of luxury and ostentation and the consequent spread of corruption and venality, in the loosening of family ties and open contempt for the dignity of home life. And so the collapse of the Empire had been, as it were, the Biblical climax of a grand orgy that had dragged the whole of bourgeois society little by little into its infernal whirl.

In earlier days, under the monarchy, we had seen these periods of public shamelessness—under the Regency, for instance, and at the end of the reign of Louis XV—but on those occasions the corruption had never touched either the intellectual strata or the respect that society, as a whole, owes to them. It was of this, perhaps, that Renan, Taine, and their friends were most keenly aware. The France of the Second Empire had allowed all general culture to fall into decay; she had abandoned the pursuit on any considerable scale of disinterested study and research and had given herself over entirely to two dangerous trends that in her periods of greatness she has always been able to discipline; these were a passion for oratorical rotundity and that mocking curiosity, with its love of wit and wine and women, that we call the “*boulevardier*” spirit. And so, little by little, she had yielded to Germany her primacy in all the higher realms of the intellect: philosophy, pure science, erudition. And at the other end of the scale she had shown herself unable to organize a sound popular education, as Prussia had already organized it. A saying current at the time put the schoolteacher on a level with the needle-gun and the Krupp cannon as an agent of the victory of Prussia. The practical conclusion of all this seemed only too evident. There was no point in seeking to whitewash or paint over in new colors a building whose foundations were rotten. The work had to begin again from the bottom. The whole system of public and private education had to be reformed, family

and social relationships must be rebuilt on sound principles—in a word, all those things must be renewed which influence, in turn, the mind and character of the individual, the opinion of society, and—in a democracy—government itself.

Such were, seventy years ago, the reactions arising and the morals drawn from a national catastrophe, and nothing could be more legitimate than the undertaking of a similar task to-day. We should all agree on the need for an analysis of our institutions and customs in search of the organic or functional defects to which defeat may have been due; on the submission to our defeated nation of a practical plan of contemplation and construction; on the need for a course of internal effort and external hygiene capable of restoring both her pride and her modesty, both her wisdom and her love of labor. What is not legitimate is to push the analogy still further. In 1870 France was entitled and, indeed, obliged to hold the constitution and the regime responsible for the ills that had befallen her; she is not so entitled today. The Empire was guilty, but the Republic was only unfortunate. The Empire was evil and destructive in its very principle, which was personal autocracy; the Republic is right and creative in its principle, which is government of the people by the people. Its mistakes were due to defects of organization or of working, whose origins can easily be traced and for which remedies are easily found. Still less is it legitimate to accuse a system of ideas made almost sacred by so many sacrifices, acknowledged in principle by both

French Empires, set down in words in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and solemnly recognized every time we cast a vote. As in 1871, intellectual and moral reform are needed to-day, but the briefest analysis will show that the faults they are to correct are entirely independent of the constitutional system or the ideology upon which it is based. I have already shown, by a single but weighty example, how wrong would be any outright and summary condemnation of democratic principles. Let us now look more closely at the reproaches addressed to the regime that yesterday had only supporters and flatterers and that today only the brave will defend.

The Empire wanted war, as all known autocracies have always wanted it in the long run, even when they had promised or solemnly vowed themselves to peace. It wanted war because it needed prestige and because the interest of the dynasty required it to compensate at one blow for a long series of aberrations themselves rooted in autocratic power, but which left a humiliated and discontented France with a sense of shame. Republican and democratic France did *not* want war. From the victory of 1918 she hoped for no other conquest than that of lasting, organic peace. It was toward this that her collective will was turned, that all her aspirations converged. There has probably been no example in history of a nation so generally and so consciously peaceful. No painful uphill effort was required of her, because she had emerged triumphantly from the latest European crisis and because she

regarded herself and was regarded by others as the strongest power. Her internal regime required no effort of popularization or revivification, because up to the time of Hitler's accession to power nobody challenged it, except a few negligible groups of conspirators and theorists. In any case, war could have done nothing to popularize a regime in essence pacific. It is, I think, beyond dispute that when Hitler seized power in Germany there was in Europe neither the risk nor any reasonable possibility of war, and history will confirm a fact which two years ago every Frenchman regarded as blindingly self-evident—that it was Hitler who brought war back into the European perspective and Hitler who imposed it on republican France.

I should be the last to deny that from that time onward mistakes were made. But the worst of these was the failure to appreciate or to foresee the danger: the failure to realize quickly and clearly enough the Hitlerite plan of rearmament, revenge, and conquest; the failure to perceive the inexorability of its unfolding. Because she was in essence pacific, France preferred to believe in the possibility of "peaceful co-existence" of the democracies already installed in Europe and the war-like autocracy growing up. The increasing sacrifices she made for the sake of this possibility—the Four-Power Pact, the weakening and ultimate abandonment of sanctions against Italy, the acceptance of the occupation of the Rhineland, Munich—did no more than weaken her prestige abroad and

increase disunity at home, and so aggravate the danger. Today I go so far as to ask myself if France ought not to have used force in 1933 to prevent a still disarmed Germany from handing over power to Hitler and his party. Nobody in France at that time contemplated so violent an intervention in German affairs; and yet it would have saved Germany and perhaps Europe.

I recognize that there were mistakes of the kind I have just described, wrong attitudes that the French shook off only little by little and one by one, and which many had still failed to shake off when the hour of collapse came. I confess to them, without a blush, because they are the right kind of mistakes. They are not so much mistakes as illusions, testimony to a premature faith in the future of peace, in the inherent virtue of peace itself. The French people almost in their entirety professed the idealist belief that no peoples want war, and that the general opposition to war would finally get rid of it by imposing upon governments the kind of compromise that is, indeed, always possible, and even easily achievable, on the sole condition that it be honestly sought. In any case, if it is possible to reproach republican France with not foreseeing the war quickly and clearly enough, this is at least a sign and a proof that she did not seek war as the Second Empire had sought it, and yet war had found the Second Empire completely isolated in Europe and in the world, without an ally, a

friend, or a sympathizer. One after another, all these had been lost and had given way to every kind of suspicion in turn, sacrificed to the inconsequent caprices of a regime whose ambitions had but little more than the consistency of dreams.

When the war began the French Republic had friends or allies almost everywhere in Europe and in the world. It is true, of course, that earlier weaknesses and failures had had their effect. The acceptance of the occupation of the Rhineland had lost us the Yugoslavian alliance and alarmed the other two partners of the Little Entente. Munich had made possible the elimination of Czechoslovakia and prepared the Russian change of front; the civil war in Spain had thrown that country into the camp of the autocracies; the alliance of Hitler and Mussolini, after being for long in the balance, was finally realized after the occupation of the Rhineland and the Abyssinian War. The irrevocable oaths had been exchanged, and Mussolini had sacrificed one victim, Austria, upon their altar. On the other hand, our alliance with England had never been so close and wholehearted, or our friendship with America so warm and cordial, especially before Munich. France was still, in the letter or in the spirit, the center of the groupings of the smaller states of Europe, and international opinion was with us and our allies. In short, France was revered and liked, instead of envied and suspected, she was bound by intimate ties to all the democracies and pacific powers of the world, be-

cause she had herself remained, or had once more become, the champion of militant democracy.

Perhaps if we turn to the problem of military technique we shall find more comparable situations. Not, of course, that the Army of the Republic was taken by surprise, in the state of internal confusion which had paralyzed the Imperial Army from the start. Not that it entered the fight with the overwhelming inferiority of armament that has been claimed, with the backing of figures ridiculous to the point of buffoonery: on this matter truth will come into her own, in a way that will astonish honest men and cover the slanderers with shame. What is true is that, like the Empire, the Republic was slow in getting under way, slow to realize the strength of the force growing up beside her and against her. The Empire had begun rearming only in 1867, on the morrow of Sadowa; the Republic, only toward the end of 1936, while Hitler had been master of Germany from 1933 and had not lost a single day. As early as 1934 the Doumergue cabinet had abandoned the search for a method of "peaceful co-existence" with Hitler along the lines of agreed limitation of armament and had begun instead a diplomatic campaign for new or closer alliances, which Germany could with some justice regard as an attempt at encirclement. The obvious counterpart should have been the immediate inauguration of a process of rearmament in France. This, however, the Doumergue-Pétain cabinet put off, as its

predecessor had done and as did its immediate successor, although it boasted of being a strong government, a government of public safety and even of national "renovation." It is equally true that, like the Imperial Army, the Army of the Republic suffered both from a superiority complex and from hidebound thinking. After the victory of 1918, just as on the eve of the defeat of 1870 it had been proclaimed the greatest in the world; for fifteen years it had, indeed, been almost the only army of any size in the world. The French Army had never lost this conviction of its own superiority; it had become an article of faith, and I prefer not to name the men who still accepted it at the beginning of the war. That was no doubt the prime reason, both for the inadequacy of the forces employed and for the out-of-dateness of the methods used when it was finally decided that the effort must be made. Too few people realized that what was needed was innovation rather than mere addition. An aging personnel continued to work on obsolete lines, because both dated from the last war and had led us then to victory. They failed to see the completely new character of German rearmament, which had the advantage of starting from scratch and rebuilding from the bottom upward, in a country organized for that sole purpose. They shut their eyes to the transformation of tactics and strategy that was the inevitable product of technical military progress. As in 1867, they strengthened the old Army, instead of boldly building a new one.

I have made this comparison in a spirit of strict impartiality. It reveals clearly that any unqualified condemnation, such as was unanimously pronounced against the Second Empire by its contemporaries, would today be an act of ignorance, injustice, and ingratitude. But it does also reveal serious mistakes at the top, such as are almost invariably found if one looks back with a severely critical eye on any sequence of human affairs. I have tried neither to hide these mistakes nor to excuse them, but I do seriously ask how far they can be traced to republican institutions or to the principles of democracy that have in great measure inspired them. Like the men of the generation of Taine and Renan, we must examine this question seriously, without any thought, conscious or unconscious, of self-interest, of justification, or of revenge. But for myself, I can give my conclusion now. It is that an examination of the mistakes made in the general conduct of affairs, or in military or foreign affairs in particular, shows that these mistakes can plausibly be traced to different features of the republican institutions of France, but not to the essential and universal principles of democracy.

Let us leave aside the failure to look ahead, the misjudging and underestimating of what was to come; these are common weaknesses that only the greatest minds escape, and they not always. In logic, converging causes can produce only one effect, but when the human mind looks at them at any given moment of time it may easily see a whole bundle of diverging possible

effects. Chance plays its part in all this. The farseeing man is he whom events have proved right, which often means no more than he who drew the winning number in the lottery. Let us look more closely at one reproach, which by dint of repetition has become almost a truism—namely, the weakness of the regime, whose characteristics in the eyes of its detractors were lack of authority, of continuity, of stability. There is in this reproach a kind of residue of truth which it is the duty of the honest student to isolate and measure. But he must first remember that problems of authority are not to be confused with problems of sovereignty. There have been autocracies in which authority remained absolute and yet frequently changed hands, which were at the same time aggressive and weak. France experienced authority of this kind for the last time only three-quarters of a century ago. There have been democracies—the Anglo-Saxon countries today are the living proof—in which authority was strong. Authority is not bound up with any particular form of constitution. A representative parliamentary system, in which sovereignty resides in the people and is delegated to elected representatives, is in principle in no way incompatible with a powerful, stable, and continuous authority, as a glance at English history proves. Let us not forget, either, the difficulty of drawing and keeping a line between the authority that in practice is needed by any government and the liberty properly claimed by nations and individuals. This problem is, indeed, the oldest and most difficult

in politics. A government can be too strong, just as it can be too weak, and the instinctive reaction of peoples is to rush from one extreme to the other. That is why anarchy always carries the risk of engendering tyranny. But it is in seeking to avoid these violent and absurd reflexes that a nation proves its maturity. For that matter, the progress of civilization, or, more accurately, the necessities of social life, have already eliminated bit by bit the elementary forms of anarchy, and we were entitled to hope that they had eliminated in the same way the more barbarous forms of tyranny. History will be astonished by their reappearance in our times, and it would indeed be an abdication of the dignity of human reason if we were to yield to their monstrous attraction on the pretext that the errors or hesitations of democracy have disappointed us.

Finally, I should like to remind my readers that the governmental instability of which so much has been made is by no means peculiar to republican democracy. The Republic today has lasted more than four times as long as any other political regime we have had in a century and a half; it was stable for more than sixty years, in the sense that its legality was no longer contested or its existence threatened, and that nobody dared publicly to oppose it. It is still stable today, whatever people may say or do about it, for it is so deeply rooted in popular habit and affection that any effort to get rid of it would be doomed to failure. And if I am asked why so many political systems, each as unstable as the other, includ-

ing the restored monarchy and the military empires, have followed one another in the last hundred and fifty years, why they all collapsed in turn, and why the Third Republic itself had to withstand so many of the kind of shocks that would have shaken or destroyed a less popular regime, I can only recall what so many statesmen of limited vision and so many second-rate polemicists seem to be unaware of or to lose sight of—that no government can remain stable in an unstable society and an unstable world. A hundred and fifty years ago France underwent, and slowly transmitted to the rest of the civilized world, the most profound transformation it had known since the spread of Christianity. How many centuries did Europe take, when once its essential principles had been transformed by the Christian revolution, to recover its consistency and the beginning of stability? Is it surprising, then, that France should need a few decades to achieve her stability? The results of great revolutionary changes are never consolidated all at once. Equilibrium is re-established bit by bit, and that, indeed, is how nature imposes *a posteriori* upon revolutions the rules that would normally have applied to a more normal evolution. To bring forth specifically new features, societies need the revolutionary method of change, but in the end revolutions do not save time. This is the quite natural explanation of the succession of shocks experienced by the political order in France since the Revolution. The shocks are not attributable to some evil virus introduced into the body

of the nation by the democratic Revolution; they are rather the growing pains that the revived body had to endure before it reached a full, stable, adult state, and if these pains have again become acute since the 1914-18 war, it is useless to seek the explanation in any particular weakness of French institutions, since the phenomenon can be observed throughout Europe and, indeed, throughout the universe. It is the war itself that is the explanation, together with the wholly new problems—territorial, economic, financial, monetary, and social—that it left behind it. If there was perhaps nothing new in the nature of those problems, their extent made them new, and only partial, crude, and patently provisional solutions had been found for them when the new war broke out.



## CHAPTER THREE

ALTHOUGH these are in my view self-evident and general truths, I would not wish to appear to use them in order to avoid the vital detail of argument. I admit freely that our system of government had in addition internal weaknesses and contained within itself organic causes of instability, ineffectiveness, and lack of continuity. I will agree, even, if pressed, and although the point appears to me to be arguable, that these weaknesses had been aggravated during the twenty-odd year period between the wars. There is no need to go over here the list of clinical symptoms that anybody can read anywhere, and whose color and detail have been magnified and heightened *ad lib.*—the useless din of oratory, the slowness of procedure, the successive encroachments and mutual usurpations of legislative on executive and executive on legislative; the group rivalries and personal quarrels, the weakness and precariousness of ministries without backing or staying power, imagination or courage, or anything that could have

given them simple competence. There was no firm direction, and as the engines were not working properly, they gave poor results in proportion to the energy they consumed. This is the picture I painted myself twenty-five years ago after my first contacts with cabinets and assemblies. But the only legitimate conclusion is the one I drew then: that the French system of government, the representative or parliamentary system as practiced in France, needs radical modifications. And even if, as is claimed, no modifications adequate to the need can be found, the only conclusion that can properly be drawn is that the parliamentary or representative regime is not the form of democratic government best adapted to French society and that we must therefore look around for more suitable ones.

What nobody has a right to do is to push the conclusion still further and stretch the verdict to cover the essential principles of democracy itself—sovereignty of the people, government of the nation by the people, supervision by the nation of the executive power, recognition and guarantee of the civil and personal rights of the individual. Let it therefore be clearly stated and remembered that the parliamentary system is not the only, exclusive, or necessary form of democracy. This, indeed, is one of the vital points of the argument. Democracy and parliamentary systems are in no way synonymous or interchangeable terms. There is, to the best of my knowledge, no country in Europe in which the origin of parliament is linked in history with a democratic movement

or with any democratic claim; wherever one looks, the parentage of parliaments is aristocratic or oligarchic, and the parliamentary system began to take on the characteristics and put forward the claims of democracy only bit by bit, as there came to be associated with it two ideas of a quite different order—namely, the responsibility of ministers to elected assemblies and the universality of the franchise. The parliamentary system, then, is not of necessity democracy. Similarly, democracy does not necessarily imply parliamentary government. There are two democratic republics, one very big and one very small, the United States and the Swiss Confederation, both of which from the time of their foundation onward have had regimes that are not parliamentary, in that the sovereignty of the people is not incorporated in and absorbed, so to speak, by parliamentary assemblies. I note in passing that the Swiss and American constitutions have each a federal basis; in other words, there is in each case a high degree of administrative decentralization and, more particularly, of “deconcentration”—that is, of devolution—of power. They seek, and have achieved, in the one case in a small and in the other in a large country, the maintenance of an active local political life. The excessive centralization and concentration of power which is a periodic subject of general complaint is therefore in no sense a specifically democratic vice. The advocates of a return to our pre-Revolutionary state would be well advised to keep in mind the fact that although the French Revolution found it

necessary—like Lincoln and his friends during the American Civil War—to fight hard for the principle of national unity, in the face of both foreign and civil war, our administrative centralization was the intentional and tenaciously defended work of absolute monarchy.

I can therefore repeat more firmly what I have already said. Supposing even that there is some basis in fact for the fashionable criticism of the parliamentary system, including even the most farfetched and those most patently inspired by self-interest, granting even that its functional defects are irremediable, beyond all renovation or reform, there still remains only one sound and logical conclusion, which is to inquire whether some different form of democratic government would not be more suited to the characteristics of French society. In such an inquiry we should no doubt be wise to look closely at the American and Swiss models. I know, of course, that throughout the nineteenth century politicians and political scientists, from Royer-Collard and Guizot to Gambetta and Jaurès, almost unanimously regarded the representative system as the most perfect form of "free government." Indeed, for a historian like Guizot, the parliamentary system, embodying the primacy of the middle classes, is the end and purpose of civilization, the final cause toward which the whole course of modern history has inevitably tended. It is none the less legitimate to refuse to join this almost universal chorus, which incidentally was inspired by the steady progress of parliamentary

government in England, and I am, for my part, quite ready to admit that the same success has not been achieved in France, provided only that it be conceded in return that the real moral of the failure is the need to find a different kind of democratic system. It is, then, in this way, and only in this way, that one should welcome the idea of a constitutional change, and it goes without saying that only the people as a whole are entitled to make that decision, that it must be made freely, by an entirely free vote, uninfluenced by any moral or material obstacle, and after free and balanced discussion. Let those who so desire try now to convince the nation—provided always that equal freedom of speech is accorded to those holding opposite views—but let nobody claim the right to coerce them. Above all, let nobody try to usurp the place of the people, for they have not resigned the power that is rightly theirs, nor handed it over to anybody.

If any light is to be cast on this controversy, the first task must be to discover why the confidence and hope of the nineteenth century were so bitterly disappointed, what was the determinant cause of the failure of France, and in particular under the Third Republic, of the representative system that succeeded and made progress in England. A fund of historical experience, rich enough by now to yield historical laws, reveals quite clearly that the proper functioning of any representative or parliamentary system requires the existence of political

parties. If the parliamentary system has succeeded in England and failed in France, it is essentially because there exists in England a strong and established party system, while in France it has not been possible for a century and a half—except in rare cases that confirm the rule—to create anything similar. It is easy to condemn parties or to jibe at them, especially if one starts from the standpoint of the totalitarian dictatorships, to whom the very name of party is a challenge. But it is none the less certain that ministerial instability, the flaccidities and vacillations of governments, the failures and the fitfulness of parliamentary debates—in short, the breakdowns and irregularities of the French parliamentary machine—are in the first place the consequences of the absence of disciplined and homogeneous parties. This was as true under the Restoration, under Louis-Philippe, under the Moral Order of Marshal Mac-Mahon, as it has been for the last twenty years. Neither Thiers nor Gambetta nor Clemenceau was able to build up around himself a strong, disciplined, and durable government party. The obstinate attempts made since the beginning of the present century to turn the “radical spirit” into a genuine Radical party have never had more than the most superficial success. Has anybody forgotten the history of this party since the last war, its internal divisions, its changes of tune, the open rivalries of its leaders, its permanent inability to maintain any real unity of policy or action? The attempt to form a great Conservative party immediately after the elections of November 1919 failed

even more lamentably, since by the end of the 1919 Parliament no trace of it remained. Ten years later M. Tardieu tried again and had to give up the attempt almost before he had begun. When the present war broke out there was no Conservative party in France. The disparate elements of the Right and Center were incapable of uniting for any purpose other than that of systematic opposition. Who was their leader? The political and personal differences between M. Paul Reynaud, M. Flandin, M. Laval, and M. Marin were more marked and more evident even than those of the Radical leaders.

There is no need to look further for the determinant, and indeed the sufficient, cause of the ineffectiveness of the parliamentary regime in France. The same congenital inability to create genuine and regular parties explains the distasteful and often revolting character of our parliamentary struggles, the persistence of personal rivalries, the impatient and often dishonest bitterness of the struggle for power. Politics is not a sport, but, like every other kind of struggle, it becomes degraded and is repulsive to the spectator if it is not governed by rules imposing a certain minimum of honesty and propriety. It is clear, I think, that impropriety and dishonesty in politics can be prevented only by stable parties, whose stability itself leads them to respect in opposition the code of behavior from which they in turn will benefit when they become the government. Further reflection will reveal no less clearly that it is the lack of organized parties in France that makes the elected

representative the agent of his electors, and that it is to the same cause, much more than to the undoubted weaknesses of our electoral system, that we owe the reduction of elected members to the role of representatives or custodians of local interests.

Is this lack of proper political parties a permanent feature of French character or is it characteristic only of French bourgeois society today? What so far has prevented the foundation of parties worthy of the name is intolerance of discipline, addiction to mocking, carping, disparaging criticism, lack of confidence in or of gratitude or almost even of good feeling toward the leader whom people make a show of following. It has been difficult for a leader to secure recognition for himself, even, or rather especially, if his qualifications for leadership were overwhelming; his authority was never frankly accepted, his followers were incapable of fidelity; the private member was usually too anxious to be in the public eye, his high opinion of himself made him impatient to leave the ranks and play a more important part. The influence of his surroundings quickly promoted the growth of what was not so much individualism as "personalism," compounded of varying quantities of vanity, suspicion, and ambition. It is possible to regard these idiosyncrasies as inherent in French character, in the sense that signs of them are to be found in greater or less degree in every period of our history. Yet any honest observer would feel bound to admit that the working-class parties and organi-

zations had a feeling of discipline which, except in the case of the Communists, was not suppression of the individual, but his voluntary subordination, the gift of his person to the public good, to a conviction, to a cause. He will agree that in these parties we did meet obedience to a rule or to a leader, pride in, rather than envy of, ability, culture, and character, and that through all the vicissitudes of parliamentary life they have regularly given proof of a coherence at least as great as that of Anglo-Saxon parties. All this, I know, raises a whole swarm of difficult issues with which I am familiar and which I shall not seek to avoid, but I am entitled to state as a fact that if around all the other political and social trends—radicalism, procapitalist liberalism, Catholic democracy, backward-looking conservatism—there had grown up parties whose structure and working resembled that of the Socialist party, parliamentary government would have been possible in France as in England, and the ideal of the nineteenth-century theorists would have become a reality.

This view will perhaps become clearer if I present another aspect of it. The risk of disruption for workers' parties lies especially in stagnation, in marking time, in the commonplace; what most surely keeps them in compact and ordered ranks is movement, advance, creation. For bourgeois parties the opposite rule applies. Movement and innovation break up the parties or embryo parties of the bourgeoisie; only resistance

can give them a transient cohesion. Since the beginning of the parliamentary system I can find only three examples of governments whose longevity was founded on homogeneous majorities that had the appearance of strong parties. These were Villèle and the ultraroyalists under the Restoration, Guizot and the ultraconservatives under Louis-Philippe, Jules Ferry and the "opportunists" under the Third Republic. In these three cases the coherence of the governments and of their majorities was due much less to the exceptional qualities of the leaders—practical mind, moral prestige, or force of character—than to the special nature of the circumstances. In all three cases the bourgeoisie in power—for Villèle and his friends were landowners rather than aristocrats—was alarmed by the upsurge of hostile forces, and its stiffening and discipline was born of and sustained by fear. It was in precisely the same spirit that the French bourgeoisie handed itself over gagged and bound to the Second Empire, to which it gave an open mandate to manage and defend its affairs.

In none of the three situations I have mentioned was the bond formed by a positive or forward-looking program, and the stability of the governments in question was related to no capacity for creation or evolution. Self-preservation and resistance to change are the only motives capable of rallying the French bourgeoisie. The principle of unity, the party rule, becomes in their case only a purely negative conception of order, of order seen as the means of destroying or holding in

check the threat to private and public privilege; the fear they all shared was the only source of their discipline. Thus, bourgeois political parties in France are compelled to choose between division and decomposition on the one hand, whenever by chance they take the risk of movement, and, on the other, the effort to hold together by limiting themselves to barren resistance, which, in fact, means to inertia, in a society evolving with terrifying rapidity and in a universe whose political life is changing at no less a pace. The time soon comes when inert resistance gives way to the pressure from within and without; the edifice that had seemed unshakable collapses with all the noise and tremor of a quasi-revolutionary movement, so that in the long run these episodes are as transient as they are petty. The records of conservative governments in France during the last twenty years—that is, of the *bloc national* governments of Poincaré and Doumergue, of Millerand, Tardieu, and Laval—are very little different from the earlier examples I have quoted.

Our political jargon, which is subject to the dictates of a rather vulgar fashion, has today one very fashionable word, *facilité*. It means something between easygoingness and total lack of principle and is used to try to blacken the democracies' efforts at social reform. But what in fact is better described as facile than the tendency to meet every difficulty of government with precarious expedients requiring the minimum of effort or sacrifice, or to run away from every radical measure, every

bold solution, every great concession, simply because these require firmness of conviction, which means imagination, logic, persistence, which in turn imply courage, audacity, and a touch of recklessness for its own sake? Taken all in all, this tendency is simply one aspect of bourgeois conservatism; it is the modern form of what was called "resistance" in Guizot's day and "opportunism" at the time of Jules Ferry. A political body that lives in fear of the risk of action must equally, and for the same reasons, be afraid of making use of youth. A fearful, pusillanimous policy has faith only in experience, and experience invariably has an element of senility. The aristocratic systems carried youth into high office and gave it wide opportunities of action, and English democracy has been able to keep something of this heritage; popular revolutions have always brought forth and led into action an immense reserve of youthful energy; popular organizations have never been afraid of youthful leaders. But bourgeois prudence has always been afraid of youthful temerity, in public as in private life. It will not take the risk of letting youth work off its high spirits in office; with very rare exceptions it insists on the slow methods of hierarchical promotion and carefully preserves the rigid ladder of rank and age. There is a little-read work of Balzac, known only for its peculiar title, that this great visionary wrote very shortly after the July revolution of 1830. In it he foretold the early demise of the bourgeois monarchy and attributed it in advance to its mistrustful neglect of youth, to which it

nevertheless owed its rise and its place. In the Third Republic the attitude to youth was only a little more enthusiastic and its consequences only a little less disastrous. But like effects invariably come from like causes. For more than a century everything that has happened in France suggests that the bourgeoisie as a political entity has been using up its sap and expending the creative virtue from which it formed and on which it nourished the new France in the great days of 1789. It would seem that for the French bourgeoisie the Revolution was a crisis in which it exhausted the greater part of its energy, the rest going in the struggle against the restored monarchy, for from then onward one finds only intermittent traces which ultimately disappear altogether. That fact settles its fate. A governing class that can maintain its cohesion only at the cost of inaction, that can survive only on condition that it does not change, that is incapable either of adaptation to the course of events or of using the fresh energies of rising generations is condemned to disappear from history.

I have already set down one firm conclusion—namely, that the arguments advanced against our representative system are not valid against the general principles of democracy. I am now entitled to add a further conclusion—namely, that the evidence provided against the parliamentary system in France proves only that the French bourgeoisie has ceased to have the characteristics of a governing class. The conclusion would

be corroborated if, in the footsteps of Taine, Renan, and their friends, we were now to probe beneath purely political phenomena to the moral conditions of society.

Admittedly the Third Republic in the interwar period is very far from presenting the same picture as that at the end of the Second Empire or certain periods of the *ancien régime*. We do not find the same shamelessness, the orgies of riotous living, the fever of speculation and gambling. There had been the beginning of something similar during the two or three years immediately following the victory of 1918, but this was no more than an animal reaction; a whole people had been kept for months at high pitch by restriction and suffering, and now everyone in his own way or according to his own means allowed the nervous tension to relax. There was, no doubt, an element of indiscipline, a fever of spending and pleasure-seeking, an orgy of business enterprise, an intolerance of all bonds, a quest for novelty degenerating even into a craze, a passion for liberty going to the point of license. Perhaps the most characteristic feature of that time was the collective frenzy of its dances. But the period did not last; as soon as nerves were calmer life took on its normal aspect. In any case, the illusion of prosperity that victory had left to us was soon dispelled. A series of increasingly severe slumps swept away one after another the adventurous new enterprises, affected even the oldest and most prudent, and made everyday life an ever graver problem in every household.

To present the interwar period as an age of pleasure-seeking, when in fact it was in most cases and for most Frenchmen a period of hard trial, is to travesty history to the point of ridicule. It is no less ridiculous to denounce these twenty-odd years as an example of political corruption. In the main, the Third Republic, like the Second and the First, was an honest regime. The lives of public men, including their private lives, were watched over by a strict and suspicious public opinion. Republican members of Parliament were in great majority honest men. Its "scandals" were exploited noisily for party purposes, but in fact were neither frequent nor widespread, and needed only to be revealed in order to provoke what were no less than moral revolts, like the one that, on February 6, 1934, was finally transformed into an insurrection.

And yet if we were to seek the source of these scandals, we should find it in the fact that private interests had succeeded in varying ways in getting their own accepted representatives into Parliament, and if we were to look at all the scandals of this type for a century back, we should observe that this collusion of business and politics is precisely one of the characteristics of bourgeois capitalism. The Civil Service had been more deeply affected by the corruption than the politicians. After having for long been justly famed for the irreproachable and almost aggressive severity of its professional virtues, it came during the interwar years to feel the contamination of business. But let us not forget that, unlike Austria, Germany, and

England, where the upper and middle ranks of the Civil Service were filled largely from the aristocracy, France was a country in which these were exclusively bourgeois. It is impossible to look back on the role of the national press in France in the last twenty years without experiencing a sense of shame, and none can honestly deny that its almost universal venality, revealing itself in both moral and technical inadequacy, became a focus of infection for the country as a whole. But our national newspapers were almost entirely dependent on big business; in other words, the press too had become a bourgeois institution.

As for the state of culture, of science, of education, on which Renan and Taine had thrown the brunt of their criticism, they were satisfactory only at their extremes, research and university education on the one hand, elementary education on the other. In these fields the Third Republic built edifices that defy its detractors. It was deplorable in the middle parts, in other words, in secondary education, to which must be added two branches improperly regarded as higher studies, namely, law and medicine, or rather, those parts of the two faculties that are devoted purely to preparation for professional practice. Here, not only had there been no progress, but decadence had become more marked. Secondary education in particular, although it held the eye of public opinion, although it attracted ever increasing numbers of both sexes, nevertheless turned out a steadily worsening product year by year. Now, the *lycée*

and the *collège* are bourgeois institutions in France, just as medicine, the bar, and the Civil Service are almost exclusively bourgeois professions. What the last century called the enlightened bourgeoisie have disappeared; the ignorant bourgeoisie with which we have to deal today no longer provides a public for any work requiring a certain minimum of knowledge. The kind of review we knew last century, pitching its vulgarizations a little high, would find no readers today, and we know the kind of magazine that has taken its place.

Whichever way we look, then, clinical observation leads us to the same conclusion. In everything connected with the bourgeoisie, in every proper domain of bourgeois life and power, we find adulteration, senescence, decay. If today all our impressions can be summed up in one, and that one of a general collapse of French society, the ultimate reason is that the framework of that society was bourgeois, and that framework has given way.



## CHAPTER FOUR

IT IS INDEED true that despite all appearances France really has been ruled for a century and a half by her bourgeoisie. The apparent exceptions presented by the interwar period are purely illusory. The grouping of forces (rather than of parties) that we called the *Front Populaire* was no more than a defensive coalition, formed spontaneously after February 6, 1934, by a kind of instinct of self-preservation, for the defense of democratic principles. The Socialist party was called upon to take its share of the task of government, but it knew perfectly well that it could exercise power only within the framework of bourgeois society. It was, indeed, for this reason that it had avoided power as long as circumstances made this possible. Even when the elected Chamber seemed to be held by a working-class majority, the bourgeoisie kept in its hands methods of resistance which yielded only temporarily to fear and became effective again as soon as the fears were stilled. It kept its grip on the local councils, the Civil Service, the press,

finance, big business, and most of all on a Senate endowed with powers such as no second chamber in any country or at any time has had before, and owing its existence to the deliberate intention of the authors of the Constitution of 1875 to create within the republican system an irreducible stronghold of conservatism. In fact, every time the will of the country, revealed through the ballot-box, had compelled the creation of a government based upon working-class support and actively reformist in tendency, the ruling bourgeoisie had been quick to expel it, like a foreign body, from its system. The French bourgeoisie held power, and was unwilling either to abandon or to share it. And, in fact, it kept it intact. When war broke out in 1939, the bourgeoisie was still at the helm. But it no longer had the qualities required to steer the ship.

I am not seeking here to draw up in doctrinal terms the indictment of one class by another. It may be that there was nothing inevitable about this twofold trend that ended in dissonance between French society and its governing class, in the inadequacy of the one to meet the needs of the other. I admit freely that the other parts of the world, and even other countries of Europe, present a different picture. But such are in France the reality and truth, as anyone can confirm by looking around him and by examining recent history with an unprejudiced eye. Is it not clear that for ten years the bourgeoisie has found no reserves of energy within itself, no source of imagination, no capacity for renewal or revival of its own

powers to deal with the economic crises; that it has found no resource other than humbly to implore government help, in flat contradiction of its own principles; and that wherever it has failed to find this help it has dropped its arms helplessly without even attempting a fight? Is it not clear that in every field of productive activity—industry, agriculture, trade, banking—it has never left the rut of its traditions, and in a France inevitably left behind by more powerful countries in the quantity of its production, has been unable to preserve the prestige of our quality? In every sphere in which initiative and invention had given us something of a lead, it allowed us to be caught up and left behind. It allowed the condition of the workers to fall below the poverty line. It did not understand that both its own interests and those of the nation required perpetual modification of the relationship between the workers and employers. In 1936, when it became necessary to cover in one stride the ground lost by the bourgeoisie, when a *Front Populaire* government tried to secure general acceptance for the great reforms that had become the one alternative to bloody revolution, the bourgeoisie accepted them only reluctantly, through fear, and then, ashamed and embittered by its own fear, did all it could by violence or by trickery to go back on its word.

The threat of Hitler, nearer and more serious every day, compelled France to rearm at great speed. The world will know some day in what state of decomposition the succession

of purely bourgeois governments that ruled France from the beginning of 1934 left our military apparatus. It will learn, too, of the incompetence shown by French industry—which means the employing class, which means the bourgeoisie—when we were faced with the need for an intensive effort of rapid re-equipment. I am aware of the accusation made against the workers' organizations, and I shall speak on that subject as freely as on all the others. But even if one admits the unhelpfulness of some of the leaders of the working class, it still remains too true that the behavior of the employers gave them, if not good reasons, at least plausible excuses; it is unfortunately too true that under cover of the national danger the employers' associations sought to go back on the reforms; it is only too true that for lack either of enthusiasm or of energy they failed to reorganize either their working methods or their system of production. The rearmament program showed the lack of any inventive spirit or boldness of approach on the part of the General Staff, and the beginnings of its application revealed almost immediately that our plant and equipment were miserably inadequate and hopelessly obsolete and that there was an acute shortage of the skilled workers who ought to have been provided in great numbers, in a country like ours, by vocational training or apprenticeship schemes. And so the state, called in as it had been during the slump, was compelled to spend milliard after milliard in order to rush up factories and import modern machines from abroad. Everything

had to be begun again from scratch under the lash of time and necessity, and in this supreme effort the French employing class showed itself to be a very poor collaborator indeed. No boldness of vision, no disinterestedness; instead, a petty penny-wise pound-foolishness, a miserable calculation of immediate profit and loss, that reduced industrial policy to the niggling arithmetic of the huckster; finally, and in contrast with what happened in 1914-18, an almost universal mediocrity among both owners and managers. This time there was no emergence of an elite of captains of industry, whose qualities of character were as remarkable as their technical gifts, in whom love of initiative and the will to succeed were greater than the desire for immediate gain. This perhaps more than anything else reveals the steady degeneration of the bourgeoisie between the two wars. It is useless to seek to explain or to excuse this degeneration by the increasing bitterness and inconvenience of the claims, or even of the intrusions, of the working class, for the challenge to the authority of the employers was scarcely, if at all, less strong before 1914. The growth of working-class strength was an undeniable fact, then as now, and the employers had to make up their minds what was to be their attitude toward it. What sort of employing class is it that can neither fight the working class nor come to terms with it, neither dominate it nor allow it its share of authority, and whose authority is useless without the backing of the law or the help of the police? There is in this age only one way for

the employers to preserve their authority, and that is to give it the support of a self-evident superiority, to prove that its exercise brings life and prosperity. That was precisely what the French bourgeoisie was no longer capable of doing.

It is also worth while to go a little deeper and examine the attitude adopted during the past twenty years by the governing bourgeoisie toward the crucial problem of war and peace. The French bourgeoisie today is both jingo and pacifist in the sense that it wants peace not so much with honor—that is a phrase that Pétain has made it impossible for us to use any longer—as with pride. When peace was still possible, it was not prepared to pay the price for it, yet it accepted war only when war had become inevitable. President Wilson's "dreams" of the League, mutual assistance, collective security, disarmament, European federation—all these ideas it received with a suspicion and scorn based partly on the precepts of an outmoded prudence and partly on the intoxication of recent victory. At a time when France was in a position to organize peace and dictate it to Europe, the French bourgeoisie disdained to use its opportunity, and so one day, without warning, it found itself face to face with the danger it had been too incompetent to avoid. The military dictatorship that had been rebuilt in Germany was more alarming than the one the Allies had just defeated, because it no longer appealed only to physical force and intellectual argument, but to the animal instincts and savage bigotries of man. Hitler had moved to power on a

new wave of revengeful nationalism; once in power his whole trend was toward universal domination; the independence of Europe as a whole and of France in particular were in danger. There came a time when unflinching acceptance of the need to fight offered the only hope of averting war and the only chance of preserving the integrity and independence of France. Then the bourgeoisie, which had shown itself incapable of welcoming a great hope, proved itself equally incapable of performing a noble duty; it showed itself as emasculate in the one circumstance as in the other. I should be justified in contrasting the conduct of the bourgeoisie with that of men who are slandered today and who too changed their line of conduct, but in the opposite direction, who worked with all their might for peace so long as there remained a hope of organizing it in Europe and then tried to kindle the flame of vital energy in the soul of France when Hitler's plan of conquest and domination had been revealed.

It is easy to understand why bourgeois prudence should have hesitated in the face of new ideas like those of Wilson and Briand, or of prospects like that of an international democracy. What seems inconceivable is that the country should not have been unanimous in the face of danger, in its determination to meet it, in its acceptance of the sacrifices that its own defense demanded. Why was there no upsurge in France after the Anschluss, after the occupation of Prague, or before or after Munich, of the spirit of national unity that in England

brought together all sections of society in a common impulse? It was the duty of the bourgeoisie, as the ruling class, to take charge of this movement and direct it; in fact, it not only did not do so, but tried to check it. Its vulgar attachment to what it thought were its own interests as a possessing class, its desire, unyielding and yet timid, to preserve its own wealth and privileges had stifled its sense of patriotism. It wanted peace at any price and yet was not afraid of Hitler, because its whole capacity for fear was taken up by its dread of the Popular Front and more especially of Communism. It saw in Nazism a much less dangerous threat to its wealth and privileges than Communism and may even have nourished a secret hope that the armed might of Hitler would discipline a too rebellious working class. And so its class egoism sent it tumbling down the slopes that led to a desire for reconciliation with Hitler at any price. I remember a remark, appalling but typical of this spirit, that fell from the lips of the editor of a great bourgeois newspaper at the time of Munich. One of his reporters, just back from one of the Paris stations, was telling how the reservists, called up as a measure of precaution, were entraining without any empty display of enthusiasm, but with every sign of serious resolve. The editor banged the table in anger. "It is easy to see," he said, "that they have nothing to lose." Thus the bourgeoisie of France allowed war to come to a people upon whom it had impressed neither its causes nor

its meaning. Thus it entered upon a war that it only half accepted and in whose justification it only half believed. History will decide how far it was responsible for military defeat, but we do not need to wait for history to proclaim now that if the first shock of military defeat was turned into national disaster, the fault lay in the irresolution of the bourgeoisie.

I hope I have by now brought out with some boldness of outline the deeper reasons for the distress that seized almost the whole nation in those desperate days. The bourgeoisie had exercised in the name of the nation the sovereignty that the Constitution of 1875 had in fact delegated to it. But the bourgeoisie had just collapsed; a dreadful tragedy had revealed its decadence and its poverty. It had shown itself not only incapable of wielding power, but unworthy of holding it, and its incapacity and unworthiness had appeared not merely as the cause of the disaster, but as the justification for it. Its final sin, less pardonable than all the others, was to consider its own ruin as that of the whole nation. It had proclaimed and had led public opinion to believe that when it had collapsed, nothing remained. When Bazaine was court-martialed for his surrender at Metz he cried, "What could I do? There was nothing left"; and the President of the Court, the Duc d'Aumale, replied, "France was left." The ruling bourgeoisie had forgotten that France was left, and France herself, car-

ried away by the wave of panic and despair, forgot that she remained. She saw what she thought was a gaping abyss at her feet and was seized with all the vertigo of fear.

Then we saw the spectacle of a nation whose body and soul were on the rack, that felt no solid ground beneath its feet and saw no straw at which it could clutch. In 1870 the Republic, emerging armed and ready from the ruins of the Empire, had immediately revived France by its appeal to those great passions of the Revolution, the love of fatherland and of liberty. In 1940 this flame could have been rekindled, but the bourgeoisie stifled it in the dust of its collapse, and apart from a few scattered cliques in the shadow of a great name, nothing appeared to fill the vacant place, to stop the yawning gulf. This consciousness of the abyss opening suddenly at one's feet, of vacuum all around one, is as unbearable for nations as it is for individuals, and yet it remains today, a year after the armistice, the dominant element in the nation's distress. Many things and many men have fallen, much material wealth has been lost, many private existences have been overwhelmed by anxiety and poverty. But these things there have always been, in all the vicissitudes of history, and no people is broken by its losses if it knows them to be reparable. Today France knows that she has lost—or believes that she has lost—everything that gives guidance to the life of a nation, and she sees no way to make good this loss. A great succession is open, and the heirs are not apparent. Such has

been the domestic tragedy of France since the armistice, enclosed, as it were, within the universal tragedy. For if France wonders what she is to become tomorrow and finds no answer, she wonders even more anxiously what is to become of Europe and what will be her place within this Europe. She does not know what her frontiers will be or her material conditions. She does not even know whether she will survive as an independent nation.

This vitally important phenomenon, the disappearance of the bourgeoisie as a governing class, has not yet been fully understood in all its reality and consequences. Impartially considered, the adventure that has bestowed upon itself the title of "New Regime" or "National Revolution" will be seen to be in fact a supreme effort to resuscitate and revivify the corpse by a generous transfusion of "young blood," and the young blood, of course, is to be borrowed from the system that defeated our own, from the Nazi ideology, regarded now as a universal donor! Yet it is permissible to ask whether the bourgeois system can assimilate this Nazi blood. It is true that the dictators have borrowed from the bourgeoisie a part of their governing personnel. If one judges only by their social origins, it is clear that their administrative cadres are in the main bourgeois rather than proletarian, although they belong, in fact, to those strata of the bourgeoisie that had fallen in class and been proletarianized by a succession of economic crises. It is equally true, though it would appear at first sight a contradic-

tion, that in almost all cases the governing bourgeoisie, the political expression of modern capitalism, entered into alliance with National Socialisms despite the fact that these latter presented themselves as anticapitalist. In Italy it was the bourgeoisie that invented and brought forth Fascism as a preliminary to putting itself into power; in France it applauds, or pretends to applaud, the National Revolution. Talk to the bourgeoisie about a classless society, about the abolition of the wage-earning class and the proletariat, about some form of social and professional unification under a collective authority, and you will find that it cannot contain its applause, for it knows perfectly well exactly how these professions of "Socialism" will be translated into action—by the destruction of working-class organizations and institutions, by the suppression or regimentation of trade unions, by the abolition of all the rights, laws, liberties, and customs in which the workers have found their principal weapons in the century-old struggle against their masters. What does it matter to the bourgeoisie if National Socialisms and National Revolutions declaim against capital (without in practice doing anything substantial against it), so long as they suppress the only enemy the bourgeoisie really fears? It is convinced that when Nazism has once got rid of working-class Socialism for it, the normal movement of history will eliminate Nazism in its turn. Then the bourgeoisie would emerge independent again, all-powerful, retempered by the life-giving breath of Nazism, and, with

its economic privileges intact, would get back the political power of which for a time it had been robbed.

Will the future justify this selfish and simple-minded calculation? No honest observer believes that it can. National Socialisms and National Revolutions can have at best only temporary alliances with the bourgeoisie. It matters little that these new movements preserve for the time being the essence of the social structure of which the bourgeoisie is the expression; they are none the less compelled to proclaim themselves anticapitalist, or, in other words, anti-bourgeois. Although in political alliance with the bourgeoisie, they usually borrow the current vocabulary of the classes opposed to the bourgeoisie, so that the essential themes of Socialist polemic, if not of Socialist doctrine, have become a part of their equipment, and the vulgar devices by which they try to use these weapons only on carefully chosen and limited targets, like Freemasonry or the Jews or Anglo-Saxon plutocracy, in no way affect the essentials of the matter. If capitalism is not the target, it none the less feels the blow. So it is foolish to imagine that when the inexorable march of history has swept away the last remnants of totalitarianism, it will leave behind it a refreshed and reinvigorated bourgeoisie. The bourgeois pact with the Nazi devil will not rejuvenate it à la Faust; rather will it emerge from its partnership more discredited, more debilitated, more suspect than today.

Moreover, I have argued so far on the assumption that the

blood transfusion from Nazism was in truth an infusion of young blood and that the principle of Nazism was a principle of life. In fact, as we all well know, this postulate is an impudent imposture that shocks human reason. Nazism does not give back youth to humanity, it takes it back to the savageries of childhood. Those among its apologists who come nearest to sincerity are perpetually telling us that it "makes men." So did the Napoleonic Empire, and so, under our own eyes, does Bolshevism. Does that mean that humanity is condemned to return to barbarism if it is to escape decrepitude? Is there no force other than brutality, no energy other than primitive ferocity? Who would ever accept so impious a view for its own sake? The problem of civilization, as it has been seen ever since humanity became conscious of itself, is precisely that of replacing animal energies by disciplined, harmonized, and spiritualized forces, of transforming savage idolatries and bigotries into reasoned certainties, or into convictions based on the demands of the individual conscience. Human progress lies in the preservation and development of vital energy, and then in its application to ends that give increasing satisfaction to the imperatives of reason and of the individual conscience, and so to those collective ideals that we call liberty, fraternity, justice. Whether we speak of Christian civilization, of classical humanism, or of historical materialism, we are thinking in fact only of that evolution which is the law of humanity itself. But Nazism proposes to turn back this current,

to smash all the acquired results of human progress, and so it flouts and denies all the ideals and principles that have been the inspiration of that progress. It is not an elixir of youth, but a deadly poison; it can kill the living flesh, but it cannot resuscitate corpses.

Today, the French bourgeoisie applauds propaganda slogans which, taken literally, would be the death warrant of capitalism. If only this calculated support had been a real and generous act of self-sacrifice! If only the bourgeoisie had really been resolved, in the interests of national revival, to sacrifice the privileges it gets from the capitalist property system! If only it had laid down, as the condition of this self-immolation, the safeguarding and extension of those principles of political, civil, and individual liberty that have been since 1789 its banner and its *raison d'être*! Then, indeed, it could have found a new temper and a new life, not from an injection of Nazi blood, but from a new and all-pervading contact with a wholly French spirit of confidence, humanity, and concord. It would have been seized and carried away on a current of creative enthusiasm such as revolutionary France knew on the night of August 4, 1789, or on the day of the Federation, and if anyone had failed to respond to the appeal, it would not have been the working masses of France, who, receiving at one and the same time the gifts of justice and liberty, Socialism and democracy, would have seen the realization of the "tried and glorious" formula of the Social Democrats, of Marx and, at bottom,

of Jaurès too. In the interests of a democratic Socialism, at last achieved or on the way to realization, the workers would have been willing, as they have always been willing, to make their contribution to the unity of the nation, and they would have had the certainty that the common needs of labor and production and the supreme requirements of peace would bring together in ever closer bonds all the peoples that share their own aspirations. This is indeed a wonderful dream, and it required only the willing consent of the governing bourgeoisie to make it a reality. If, then, there remains any spark of life in it, let it use it to set an example of sacrifice. Then it really will rise again, phoenix-like, from its own ashes. But it will never do that. It is less capable even than the aristocracy of 1789 of abdicating its privileges, though it has long since ceased to regard them as legitimate. To be capable of sacrificing its immediate interests it would need precisely the understanding, the courage, the spirit of abnegation that it has lost; it would mean that the national disaster and the sufferings of France had already brought about, deep in the conscience of the community, that moral revolution of which, in fact, no single symptom is visible.

The term "moral revolution" is used intentionally; it indicates the seat of the infection from which the French bourgeoisie is dying before our eyes. The organ affected, the one from which the disease has spread gradually to all the others,

is precisely the moral faculty. To go more closely into the history of the bourgeoisie, taking facts and texts for over a century and a half, is to come only to the same conclusion. That was indeed the source of the evil, the root of the contagion. Not that the French bourgeoisie did not have great virtues. It was upright and honest, patient and prudent, modest and decent, thrifty and reasonable, entirely suited to the conditions of life of an earlier period. Within the narrow limits of family, profession, city or village life, its class had prospered and multiplied. But it was not made for life under intense, large-scale capitalism, for the phase of accumulation and overproduction of wealth. The system that suited it best was one of steady and prudent progress, that of nascent capitalism, with its family concerns, its fortunes slowly accumulated over long periods from modest profits, its perpetual rounding off of income from factory or estate, its almost insensible modification of social conditions. In such an atmosphere the French bourgeoisie found the circumstances that protected and encouraged it. It was not fitted for a life of frequent shocks, for the sudden ups and downs of the trade cycle. The breakdown of barriers, the intermixing of classes, customs, and standards of life, weakened and corroded it, as acids corrode metal. Look around, and you will perceive that there are two parts the French bourgeoisie cannot play without losing something of its qualities: they are the roles of new rich and new poor. The qualities that it has lost are those that the shape of the new age

made unfashionable and almost ridiculous. Its onetime rigid code of honor has weakened and collapsed under the influence of its contacts with modern big business. In the days of Birotteau and Père Goriot, even in those of M. Poirier, everyone thought it proper and natural that a bankrupt should blow his brains out. Honor may have been limited to respect for the signature on a contract, but that at least meant that the concept of honor existed. It has been worn out now, under the pressure of the great capitalist crises that have been following one another for nearly a century in an almost regular sequence and with ever increasing intensity, and so the bourgeoisie has lost its own sense of inward dignity. It has lost too that energy and the creative vigor of the mind that presuppose some measure of honor, dignity, and self-satisfaction. The decay of its private virtues has led to that of its public virtues too.

Why should the French bourgeoisie have shown this lack of adaptability to a new social climate and have perished in consequence, whilst other sections of the middle classes, like those of the Anglo-Saxon countries, for instance, have been able without too great difficulty to adjust their moral standards to the progress of economic evolution? The contrast is no doubt explained by differences of national character and perhaps also by the importance of the religious factor in the education and upbringing of the Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie, even today. In any case, the facts are there, patent and eloquent. The decline

of the bourgeoisie in France kept pace with the transformation and concentration of capitalist production; it became more marked as new external and internal problems inherent in the new world economy arose and took shape. After the collapse of the Second Empire, after the heroic impulse that is forever personified by the name of Gambetta, after the solemn *examen de conscience* that I have attached to the names of Renan and Taine—though, in fact, many other memories are associated with it—after the prolonged and conscientious effort that led to the passage and coming into force of the Constitution of 1875, it was permissible to believe that the patient was on the road to recovery, the progress of the disease arrested. Instead, there came the inevitable relapse. Ten years later there was the Boulanger escapade, and five years after that the Panama scandal. The French bourgeoisie could recover its capacity for political leadership only in the one environment suited to its temperament, which would mean putting back the clock of world economy by more than a century. That, indeed, is precisely what today's "National Revolution," driven by its own internal logic, seems to be seeking to do. Yet it is an enterprise in which even the totalitarian dictatorships must fail. Nazism and Fascism may have been able to bring about the temporary eclipse of the great spiritual principles that have guided humanity for centuries, but they cannot annul or obliterate from our memories the vast scientific and technical discoveries that have transformed the physical universe. They may have been

able to lead millions of men back to brutal savagery, but they cannot lead the economic system back to the era of hand tools and gilt-edged securities, of the family workshop, the family store, and the family plot.

In this discussion of the role of the bourgeoisie I have considered it throughout only as the governing class, the political expression of modern capitalism. I readily agree that this class has produced many individuals who in the last two years have set an invaluable example of patriotism and devotion to their country. War and defeat, like all great collective crises, have been the testing bench of character, and among those who have emerged unscathed and greater in stature from this process of natural selection are bourgeois of every shade, whose services will be needed in the France of tomorrow. I will go further and admit that not only individuals but whole groups belonging to the more cultured section of the old liberal and Catholic bourgeoisie have formed the most compact centers of national resistance. Both these individuals and these groups would no doubt be the first to agree, in the sincerity of their own consciences, that the class to which they belong is no longer in a fit state to maintain its monopoly of property, nor in consequence to exercise its privilege of government, and that the historical justification for its existence therefore no longer exists. France stands today at the end of a second revolution, which in fact has lasted more than a cen-

tury. The first revolution transferred power to a rising class that was already to a great extent in control of property. The second threw out a decayed class that was unable to adjust its rigid temperament either to the necessities of industrial production or to the needs of democratic government.



## CHAPTER FIVE

THERE WAS a time when the cry was, "The King is dead; long live the King!" The transmission of royal authority took place automatically and without a moment's hiatus. In France, the reigning class has passed away, and the nation sees no other to proclaim in its place. She abhors with her whole heart the totalitarian dictatorships, which in any case will disappear even from the countries where they now hold sway, for they will not survive the war, and humanity will root out the cancer that was beginning to eat at its vitals. She will go back then to one of the *ancien régimes*, and, if so, to which—to the one we knew before 1789, or before 1830, or even before 1848? A powerful Monarchist party, based on traditions and loyalties still almost intact, and with a majority in the National Assembly, failed in just such an effort after the defeat of 1871. What reasonable man would dream of repeating the experiment today, with the monarchy no longer even a memory for anybody and no more than the obstinate dream

of a handful of theorists? The experience of England and Belgium has shown that monarchy is not incompatible with real democracy, but in France it ceased a century ago to be the symbol of national unity, and if it were tried again it would have the backing neither of a durable aristocracy nor of a coherent bourgeoisie, nor yet of a loyal populace. If the monarchy were to be reinstated, as part of a representative system, and with a liberal trend, it would be no more than a new edition of the parliamentary Republic in all its debility. If it were to return as a counterrevolutionary Restoration, it would be in violent opposition to the reality of things and to the inevitable trend of the times. The country knows perfectly well that all these chimeras belong to a hopelessly dead past. On the other hand, it has never been deceived by the opportunist adventure initiated under cover of the national disaster and dignified by the name of National Revolution. Instinctively, it feels in it a crude compromise between the principles of monarchy by divine right, which it rejects with everything in it, and totalitarian discipline, which it finds even more repugnant. It sees in its daily hesitations and aberrations the symptoms of the congenital contradictions that divide it from the start. Who, then, is the heir of the Third Republic? Who will be its successor?

France is conscious of living through an interregnum which will last she knows not how long and lead to she knows not what. These great historic intermissions are always times

of tragic anxiety, and today the chasm lies open before a country two-thirds occupied by enemy forces, committed to a war in which she is no longer a participant but which none the less goes on, and in which her own destiny is one of the stakes. Even a France free, and with material conditions stable, would feel the burden of this unexpected hiatus in her sovereignty. How could she be other than overwhelmed by the unprecedented conjuncture in which circumstances have placed her today? It is true that on every occasion in history in which the form of authority has changed, there has occurred what I have described, in a much misunderstood expression, as "*une vacance de la légalité*," a constitutional holiday. Even when the new authority is installed immediately, it cannot bring with it a ready-made legality; the institutions of the authority overthrown have been destroyed with it, and those of the new authority can be developed only slowly, so there ensues an interval that of necessity is filled by temporary institutions, in some degree dictatorial in character. The phenomenon is a normal one and alarms nobody, and a country like France, which has seen many political revolutions, accepts it as such. What is lacking today, however, is not law or constitution, but sovereign authority itself, and it is impossible to say when and by whom the gap will be filled.

There is, indeed, an heir apparent, whose claims can be said to be still valid, since it is the natural sovereign. That heir is the people themselves, those whom a Catholic propagand-

dist in a recent pamphlet called "the multitude." Why, then, do the parties and organizations most genuinely representative of the masses not make their presence felt? Why do they not demand power, as happened in September 1870 after the collapse of the Empire? Why has not public opinion in France turned instinctively to them? Why does it still not turn to them for help? The people themselves constitute the only legitimate and possible successor; only they are left, and on them converges every trend of history. By an all but unanimous movement the whole country hopes for the suppression of monopoly and privilege—which is justice; for the supersession of a social structure based on artificial and hereditary distinctions by one based on natural and personal qualities—which is equality; for the subordination of private interest to public good—which is the collective organization of the production and distribution of wealth; and for peace—which is international order. Socialism and Trade Unionism embodied in advance this desire for a new order. They are in line with the whole trend of economic evolution, of which, indeed, they are themselves the product. They are the rising sap of the nation, and nobody who has lived and worked on familiar terms with them can have failed to sense the inexhaustible reserve of new forces that seethes within them. In them are distilled the essence of all the popular education whose steady progress in France in the last half-century has coincided with the decay of bourgeois culture. An active

Socialist or Trade Unionist was astonishingly avid for knowledge, serious in thought, and mature in judgment; a working-class or peasant audience at a public meeting would follow the most subtle technical argument with a degree of attention, of care, of pleasure, at which, for my part, I have never ceased to wonder. In that, I am a jingo: the French working class is, I believe, the most intelligent in the world. The instability of the governments of the Third Republic was essentially a product of disorder and indiscipline, of the lack of the compact, homogeneous, and durable parties on which a representative system must be based. But I have already pointed out that the working-class parties in no way shared this purely bourgeois incapacity. They formed compact bodies, united and disciplined in tactics and in voting, and remained faithful in action to programs publicly debated and defined.

Indeed, they laid themselves open rather to the opposite reproach, of having sacrificed too much and too readily to their own rules of order and unanimity. This accusation has in any case been made against them, and I believe it to be in part well founded. Discipline is a normal state for a political party, and its unity should be strictly maintained against selfish defections inspired by personal interest, ambition, or other form of temptation. In return, some relaxation, or even the total suspension, of party bonds, must be boldly accepted whenever some extraordinary crisis turns the problems of

public life into matters of conscience. The real criterion of morality in the life of political parties, as in most of the incidents of private life, is disinterestedness. The breaking of party bonds is immoral and hateful whenever it bears any trace of what, in the widest sense of the term, I would call venality. It becomes respectable, and even praiseworthy, when it is no more than obedience to the imperative demands of conscience in the face of some crucial problem. It is, incidentally, by these efforts at discrimination in particular cases that British parties have been able in practice to transform and renew themselves along with the spirit of the times, instead of clinging to immutable programs and unchanging leadership.

There I must leave this digression, on which I would not have entered had I not wished to provide proof of my own sincerity. In tune, then, with the feelings and ideals of the masses, breathing, as it were, in tune with universal laws of economic development resting on solid foundations and tried methods of propaganda, recruitment, and organization; having proved their ability to govern by their participation in public life and their handling of their own internal democracy, Socialism and Trade Unionism had all the qualities and all the qualifications required to take over the vacant succession in the name of the workers of France. And yet the fact remains that the nation showed no sign of turning to them. On the contrary, from all corners there came a hail of sardonic rumors, often originating in the mouths of men who owed

their whole career to the Socialist movement, announcing that Socialism was dead, evaporated in the heat of catastrophe. Others noticed, with ill-concealed satisfaction, its "irremediable political and intellectual decline." As for Trade Unionism, if it was not yet quite dead, it was at least so weakened that the National Revolution would have no difficulty in absorbing it into its own corporatist organization. There was undoubtedly a good deal of reckless and wishful thinking in these assertions. Is Socialism really bankrupt or moribund? It was much harder hit by the repression that followed the revolt of 1848 and the Commune of 1871. The many military executions with their aftermath of pseudojudicial repression were supposed to have uprooted Socialism forever. To come down to our times, Socialism was infinitely weaker and more fragile just after the period that covered the Treaty of Versailles, the Victory election of 1919, and the Communist split, which robbed it of its most active members. Yet on each of these occasions the party has risen again from its ashes, in the teeth of the prophets of disaster, both stronger and more conscious of its strength. How could it have been otherwise? The Socialist idea is one of the inventions of the human mind, but it feeds on the inevitable nature of things. In the form given to it by the brilliant synthesis of the ideas of Marx and Jaurès, which for thirty years has been its doctrine in France, it is the meeting place of all the dynamic ideas of our time. What are the essential problems facing not only our own coun-

try, but every other too? The reconciliation of the rights of nations with the need for peace, and of the rights of individuals with the need for order, of planned production and consumption with the free development of the personality of the individual. It was the Socialist movement that stated these problems for the first time in the modern world—or rather, it was they that created Socialism. They are symbolized in the name “Social Democracy,” which was the official title of most of the political organizations of Socialism, and whose full meaning we begin to see today for the first time. That is why it is safe to predict that the Socialist movement will rise again. What does it matter if the silence of oppression has reduced it once again to purely embryonic existence? The nature of things and the power of ideas will do their work; its renaissance cannot long be delayed and is probably already near.

Nevertheless, I recognize—and I must insist on it once more—that the working people of France have not turned to it in their distress. Its presence was not felt even in the tragic hours of defeat and armistice. At a time when the workers of France saw the bourgeoisie falling into decomposition before their eyes, when they had only to come forward to seize its empty place, the Socialist movement that should have been their natural weapon and their normal instrument was itself absent. Why? To answer that question we must proceed to a ruthless examination of our own consciences.

When the political framework of bourgeois life fell to pieces under the weight of military disaster, one passion, and one only, was capable of running like an electric current through the French nation; one passion only could pull it together and give it a new and living unity. That passion was patriotism, the instinct of national self-preservation. And no party could carry the people with it or become the instrument of a spontaneous popular movement if it failed to embody that passion. The Jacobins in the Committee of Public Safety had personified this "sacred love of country" in 1793, as had Blanqui during the siege of Paris, as Jaurès would have done, if he had lived, during the 1914 war, as his masters and disciples, Guesde, Renaudel, Vaillant, and Albert Thomas personified it when they stepped into his still bleeding place and led the people of France to the vanguard of the struggle. But in 1940, as we must admit, French Socialism failed to follow in those footsteps.

That was not, as its detractors claim, because it had "forgotten the nation" in the heat of its own long propaganda or because it felt the accumulated weight of its "antimilitarist and internationalist" campaigns. It had always seen international order as resting upon a foundation of free and independent nations. It had fought against jingo patriotism, but itself remained ardently patriotic. It had worked with its whole being for the building of a just, equitable, and stable

peace, but it had never cultivated the more cowardly forms of pacifism. It cried shame on any tendencies that may have arisen to confuse love of peace with the acceptance of slavery, and it had never ceased to proclaim that it would be the first to rise in defense of the soil of France if she were attacked. It had mocked at the set and unimaginative routine that kept the sons of working-class homes imprisoned for long periods in dreary barrack-rooms, and its mockery may not always have been in the best of tastes. It had quite properly denounced the odious system, less tolerable than ever since every citizen has become a soldier, that makes the army in time of peace the guardian of a capitalist "order," the weapon of a class against the majority of the nation. But it had never ceased its endeavors, never since the unforgettable efforts of Jaurès, to raise the organization of national defense to the level made possible by scientific, technical, and social progress. It is true that in a spirit of ritual fidelity to a traditional symbol, the Parliamentary Socialist party continued to vote against military credits, well knowing that its vote could not prevent their passing, and there was no doubt something hypocritical in this attitude. But when, in 1936, it was called upon to take office in a government of which one of its members was the head, it was the first to propose the supplementary votes that were at last to make possible the replacement of the obsolete equipment of the last war by more modern arms. The first considerable and coherent attempts since the Nazi

revolution to place France in a position to resist German aggression bore the signature of the Socialist party. In the same way, Jaurès, Guesde, and Vaillant had themselves not only voted against military credits, they had led the campaign against them with much greater polemical violence than their successors, but the memory of this agitation did not cut them off from the patriotism of the mass of the people when the 1914 war broke out.

What, then, separated the Socialist movement from the working class in the hour of defeat in 1940 was neither its established doctrine nor its long-standing propaganda, but something much simpler and much more recent—namely, the constrained and ambiguous attitude it had had from Munich onward toward the problem of the threatening war. The working population had waited in vain for a clear and inspiring lead from the Socialist party, which remained incapable of making up its mind one way or the other. It is true that if one looks only at the documents prepared by Socialist Conferences or the Parliamentary Socialist party, a clearly defined doctrine emerges. Having been, in most cases, myself responsible for the drafting of these official texts, I am in a position to know what they contained. They maintained rigidly the doctrine that the best guarantee of peace was collective security based on respect for obligations, and they proclaimed unequivocally the duty of the workers to defend the independence of the country against all danger and all aggression.

But the texts of motions and resolutions count for little in the eyes of public opinion, which prefers to judge by actions and public attitudes. And our attitude was ambiguous, hesitant, half ashamed of itself. Opposing the texts officially stating the position of the party had always been a minority group within the party, deriving its importance from the position of the men who led it rather than from its own size, dangerous because of the arguments it concealed rather than of those it expressed. The simple truth is that from Munich onward the French Socialist movement was divided into two parts, in conflict with each other over the fundamental problem of public life and varying in their relative strengths as circumstances changed. It was this internal conflict that reduced it to impotence and almost to silence. It was anxious at all costs to maintain an appearance of unity, and any clear line of action, or even any categoric statement, would have revealed the latent dichotomy and would no doubt have led to a schism. The opposing forces within it were balanced to the point of mutual cancellation. At the same time, the attacks and slanders from outside, which had broken against it so long as its unity had been a reality, had redoubled in virulence from the moment when internal dissension gave them an echo in its own ranks. And so, for nearly two years, it had dragged on a humiliated and mistrusted existence, until in the end it seemed to go unnoticed. It would surely have been better to allow open rupture to separate the two elements whose attitudes to

a vital problem were beyond reconciliation. The outcome would have been the test. The mass of the workers would have re-formed their ranks around those whom events had shown to be right. All this I have confessed before—but the cult of unity had by then prevailed.

I would add with no less frankness that the party had injured, or rather compromised itself, by its still recent collaboration with Communism. There was, of course, nothing to blush for in the alliance it had contracted amid the eddies of the insurrection of February 6, 1934; and in the face of an immediate threat to the Republic itself, in the “united action” pact that was to become the foundation of the Popular Front. An irresistible and spontaneous popular instinct drove the Socialist party into an alliance that was seen as, and indeed was, the defender of freedom. Today we have seen the unfolding, under cover of national disaster, of the adventure of which February 6 was only the first episode, and we can no longer doubt that without the alliance of all the forces of democracy and the Republic, France would have been reduced five or six years ago to the condition of Franco Spain. Was there, then, anything impious or harmful in this alliance? Is “collaboration” forbidden only when it is with fellow Frenchmen? Nor is it possible any longer to complain of the Socialist party’s endorsement of the French-Soviet pact, negotiated as early as 1935 by M. Laval and M. Flandin, or of the support it gave,

during the interval between Munich and the war, to the proposed Treaty of Military Aid with the Soviets. Here again, time has brought proof. A closer understanding between Soviet Russia and the French and Anglo-Saxon democracies—in other words, an international Popular Front—would have saved peace!

But that is precisely what did not happen, because Stalin had evaded the understanding. In the end it was with Hitler that he made his pact, and it was the bargain struck by those two that made possible the invasion of Poland and led immediately to war. Then, very properly, public indignation was aroused; Stalin had betrayed peace, and the Communist party, remaining obstinately loyal to him, was betraying France. It was natural that this tragic reversal of policy should call to mind all the successive recantations of the French Communist party in recent years. Up to the eve of the 1935 pact it had advocated and practiced "revolutionary defeatism"; immediately after, it had become the most ardent champion of the honor and independence of the motherland. Up to the eve of the Russo-German pact it had set the tone, and indeed supplied the impetus, of the campaign against Nazism; immediately after, it proclaimed its unchanging submission to Stalin, the ally of Hitler against France. These changes of front had happened without previous preparation or any attempt to soften the blow, and with no other possible explanation than a change of orders from Moscow, which, in turn,

were explicable only by the successive reversals of Soviet policy. Thus it had become clear that the trend of Communist party policy was not determined by the party but imposed from outside. It owed blind obedience to orders coming not from an international organization, but from another power, a state which changed the orders of its own accord as its own national interests changed. The Communist party was thus not an internationalist, but a foreign, nationalist party. The distinction is vital. Internationalism is based on the postulate that among all nations at the same stage of economic development there exist a certain number of common ideals and interests. The activity of an internationalist working-class party is based on the conviction that if one looks far enough below the surface and far enough into the future, the interests of every country will be seen to be inseparable from the deep and long-run interests of the other countries of Europe, and even of humanity itself. It believes that in serving the international cause it is serving the cause of its country: it is national in its internationalism, and because of its internationalism. The Communist party was quite the contrary. It was a foreign nationalist party, because it was based on the postulate that the cause of the workers of other countries depends on the particular interests of one single state, the Soviet Republic, and then not on any ideal and permanent interests, but on the changing requirements of its material and political interests.

Now, from August 1939 Stalin had decided that the inter-

ests of the Soviet Republic required it to ally itself with Hitler, the enemy of France. It was therefore inevitable that during the war and immediately after the defeat of June 1940 the submission of the Communists to Stalin should appear as treachery to the country. It was no less inevitable that something of the disgust aroused by this treachery should be felt, with varying degrees of confusion, toward the Socialist party too, which everyone thought of as closely related to the Communist party, as its sponsor and guarantor, first in the Popular Front and then in the parliamentary majority of 1936. The confusion arose the more easily because a large section of public opinion has never established in its own mind any clear distinction between Socialism and Communism—though these are in fact two completely separate forms of working-class doctrine and action—and because, in the current vocabulary of their common detractors, the term “Marxism” is used to cover both. In a situation whose every element had been transformed, it was hard to remember, as justice required, that “unity of action” had been, in the strictest sense, imposed by circumstances, so that its real authors were none other than the authors of the plot that had put republican liberties in danger. People put Communism and Socialism “in the same boat,” denouncing the one and claiming to condemn the other to some sort of automatic elimination. Today, fifteen months after the armistice, these unhappy errors seem to have been corrected, but the problem that weighed so heavily on the

prewar years remains as a burden no less alarming for the future. What can and should be the place of Communism in French political life? The question is still open, and we must face it frankly, the more so since a new change has taken place in the Soviet position and has had a repercussion on French Communism no less immediate than those of the earlier changes.

Stalin was unexpectedly attacked by Hitler. He has become the ally of the Anglo-Saxon democracies. Soviet Russia is fighting today for stakes among which the liberation of the occupied countries, and therefore of France, has a prominent place. A Popular Front has been formed again among the peoples. In this struggle Soviet Russia has astonished world opinion and compelled its admiration. Those thinkers who imputed to Bolshevism, as an unforgivable crime, the perversion and degradation of the human race must, if they are honest, now revise their judgment. It is true that Bolshevism destroyed belief in personal liberty, independent criticism, and moral and intellectual scruples, insofar as these had existed in Russia, but it has also preserved and even exalted courage and the spirit of sacrifice; it has created a faith. Like the peasants of France under the Terror, the people of Russia are attached to the system that has been imposed upon them, because they remember with horror the regime that Bolshevism overthrew and see only enemies in those who would claim to deliver them. In France, idolatrous submission to

Stalin coincides once more with needs of national patriotism, as it did in 1935 and in the days before Munich, and this time it no longer expresses itself in empty words and propaganda campaigns of doubtful purpose. French Communists are risking their lives; they are in the front ranks of those who are oppressed, as of those who are in the resistance. Among them and among the Jews, Hitler chooses his hostages and his victims. When victory has been won, it will be clear that the new unity of the nation has been cemented with their blood; how, then, can they be excluded from that unity? Yet the problem will not have been solved; we shall still be confronted by the intolerable anomaly of the intrusion of a foreign, nationalist party into French political life. For all its great record, French Communism can be accepted as an element assimilable by the national organism, it can take its full place in public life, only if a radical change has taken place either in the nature of the bond that unites it with Soviet Russia or in the relations between Russia and the rest of the European community. Either French Communism must free itself of its obligations toward Soviet Russia, or Soviet Russia must accept obligations toward Europe, or both.

Without this change, France would inevitably find herself once more a prey to the internal difficulties from which she suffered before. Is it really too much to hope for or to count on? Just as French Communism was rigidly dependent on Russian Bolshevism, so there were people in France linked

with German Nazism or Italian Fascism by ideological bonds almost equally close. Is it fantastic to hope that all these wounds will have been cauterized in the fires of war, of common suffering, of final liberation, so that none but *free* Frenchmen will remain in France? Is it not reasonable to believe that Russia, for her part, may have had to modify her internal regime in order to secure unity against German aggression? For my own part, I am counting firmly on a development by which, after the disappearance of the totalitarian dictatorships, after the victory of the Anglo-Saxon democracies—a victory in which she will have taken a heroic part, but to which she will owe her own salvation—Russia will inevitably find herself integrated into a European community, a European federation. A genuine peace treaty will be a charter of peaceful co-operation and emulation between nations; as that charter is consolidated, as the ideal and material interests that they have in common are revealed, Soviet Russia will cease to be an extra-European power, and French Communism will cease to be a foreign sect within the nation.



## CHAPTER SIX

CONFUSION and indecision within its own ranks over the problem of war, confusion in the public mind with a Communist party tainted with treason—these two reasons suffice to explain why the Socialist movement was left out of account in a series of events which should logically have carried it into the vacant seats of power. But there were, in fact, other reasons for the absence of the Socialists and, in consequence, of the people themselves, and the evils that they represent have not yet been fully explored. I have said that the politically active working class, and the Socialist movement which was its natural expression, had provided a model of disciplined organization, of political maturity, of aptitude and readiness for rational education. This view I still affirm. One accusation, never fully formulated, has been made against both the workers and the Socialist movement, and this I reject; as I deny the right of its authors to make it. It is that they have developed, alongside bourgeois corruption, a different form

of corruption of their own; that they have seen human progress in terms of crude material advantages; that in their impatient search for material well-being they have cultivated idleness and selfishness—in a word, and in the terms of the most common formulation of the accusation, that they have debased the concept of duty by placing all their emphasis on the rights they claim. It is constantly said, for example, that the social laws of 1936, the reduction of working hours, the increase of wage rates, the introduction of the idea and the practice of leisure, led to a debasement of the moral sense of the working class. It is important to remember that these social laws, which it is so easy to criticize after the event, were the price we paid to avoid civil war. In any case, what in fact lowers working-class morality is not paid holidays, shorter hours, or higher wages, but unemployment and poverty. Leisure is not idleness, but rest after labor. The organization of leisure, increases in the purchasing power of wages, these allow the worker's family to maintain its health by exercise and its spirits by games, to give more time to domestic occupations and affections, and one day they will make it possible for working-class mothers to give up all their time to their homes and families; in other words, they strengthen, in fact, the moral factors of existence. Humorists have found a good deal of material in the "two-Sunday week," and it may well be that aesthetic feelings were not wholly satisfied by the spectacle of the long processions of couples and families with

children, whose tandems and motorcycles and light cars filled the roads around our big towns every week-end. No doubt the campers in the meadow and picnic parties on the edge of the wood made a less elegant sight than the golf courses on which the employing classes were gathering at the same time, but the picture was none the less both moral and encouraging. These are the ways in which a nation finds new youth and new strength, for there is no joy in labor without joy in life.

Or, to take the problem on a somewhat higher level, and looking at it within the framework of capitalist society, will anybody deny that the incessant progress of science and technique *must* be accompanied by a regular improvement in the conditions of working-class life? Modern industry makes it possible to produce an ever increasing quantity of goods in an ever shorter time. Can we really refuse the wage-earner his modest share of this general increase in wealth, and what can this share be if it is not a reduction of previous working hours and an increase of previous wage rates? That is his mite, and only the most iniquitous abuse of force would deprive him of it. When the wage-earner demands it, he is accused of giving way to a depraved spirit of self-seeking. He would not need to demand it if others had thought first to offer it. The bourgeoisie is indeed ill-placed when it professes surprise and indignation at the "incessant demands" of the workers, and the spirit it believes this indicates among workers of all kinds.

It was the demands of the workers that marked the first awakening of their class-consciousness; they organized to press their demands, to defend themselves against the iron law that governed their work and wages and that based them, not on the amount of national wealth, not on the cost of living, but on the law of supply and demand, on the current price of human merchandise in the labor market. How many people really know in detail how the worker in agriculture or industry spends his money? How many can imagine how the smallest reduction in hourly wage rates affects immediately the life of every member of the family? They are accused of forgetting their duties too easily; is it not truer to say that it was the rest of us who began it, by forgetting their rights? For many long centuries the working class has known nothing but duties—duties forced upon the worker by the need to live, by all the organs of social coercion and religious persuasion. What they call their emancipation was in fact the laborious conquest of rights already morally theirs, and this conquest is not yet complete. We are told that there can be no rights without duties; no doubt, but it is equally true that there are no duties without rights. Is it surprising that the workers are not always conscious of the interdependence of these two ideas, when they have suffered so long from its denial? And is their interdependence always present in the minds of those who have never been deprived of their rights—whose rights today look very much like privileges?

All this is indubitable; my arguments are irrefutable, and yet some instinct deep within me, some hidden anguish almost, warns me that I am very near one of the deep-lying roots of the evil. In terms of retributive justice all my evidence and all my arguments are valid. It is still not true that the demoralization of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a parallel perversion of the masses. Nobody is entitled to make this grave accusation against the mass of the people, the active workers of the Socialist and trade union movements, or even their responsible leaders. Even if it were possible, in some spheres and in some circumstances, to find instances of exaggerated demands or too embittered protest, they would be a hundred times excusable. Let us accept all that. It is still true that the real problem lies elsewhere. What we are trying to discover is why the working class, acting through its legitimate representatives, did not seize the succession left open by the collapse of the bourgeoisie. And proof of purely negative innocence provides no satisfactory answer to this question. The fact that the working class was not guilty of the charges laid against it was not enough to make it worthy of the mission of sovereignty that lay within its grasp. The bourgeoisie was collapsing because it had shown itself unworthy of its part; it was all the more important for the working class to prove its worthiness to take the vacant place. Sovereignty implies superiority. The working class should have been able to show not merely a clean moral record, but an unmistakable moral

superiority, and that it did not possess. It lacked precisely the qualities needed to lead a nation—generosity, magnanimity, an ideal bearing, self-evident disinterestedness, readiness to sacrifice one's own desires to the common good, all that Nietzsche called somewhere "the grand manner in morals," all those qualities that make of morality a religion and of propaganda an apostolate.

Here again I should like to illustrate my meaning by more detailed examples. The *Front Populaire* government thrown up by the election of 1936 had introduced laws reducing working hours, consolidated wage increases by the operation of collective agreements, secured recognition for trade unions, and legalized the status of shop stewards. At the same time, it had inaugurated a vast and methodic program of rearmament, in view of the threat of German armament and the discovery that nothing had been done, or even seriously attempted, since the end of the last war, to renew our own military equipment. The two operations were to be carried through simultaneously, without either affecting the other adversely; indeed, wherever the requirements of national defense were affected, the 1936 social legislation allowed and provided for every kind of exception. But this did not get rid of the fear in the public mind that the new laws might interfere with the execution of the rearmament program, and that fear was maliciously encouraged and exaggerated. The proof of the malice and the exag-

generation lies in the fact that the 1936 rearmament program, including the additions made to it later, was carried through on time. Better than that; when France entered the war, and despite all that has been said and is still said to the contrary, inside and outside France, the execution of the program was considerably in advance of its time-table. The French Army was already in possession of up-to-date equipment which, in quantity at any rate, was enough to place it on a footing of equality with the German Army, and that, indeed, is why the French Army leaders faced the prospect of war without too great apprehension. Nevertheless, and whatever the final and total result may have been, the manpower problems encountered in the execution of the program were very real. Overtime was bargained over or refused by the unions, even for the production of material urgently needed; agitation persisted in a good many factories; production per man-hour fell.

Whenever any attempt was made to explain to the workers that they had not understood the spirit behind the new laws, they invariably replied that they were defending the letter of their rights so tenaciously only because they felt them to be threatened. "The employers," they said, "have not accepted the laws honestly and wholeheartedly; they are using the requirements of national defense to sabotage them. We are being asked to work harder, but have the employers done all that is required of them in the way of systematization, organization, capitalization? Have they built new factories, installed

new machinery, started multiple-shift systems, trained skilled workers? No. They have been afraid of expansion, afraid of risk, afraid of earning less from government orders than from private enterprise. When all this incompetence leads to delay and shortage of equipment, it is always the worker who is asked to make it good, and the concessions we make today will be used against us tomorrow. Why should we be the only ones to make the extra effort and the extra sacrifice?" There is no doubt that this kind of complaint was very largely justified. Nearly everything the worker said was true. Insofar as the problem was purely one of distributive justice, nothing could be said against them; they were in no way guilty. But were they showing themselves worthy of the mission of leadership to which they laid claim? They were quite right in denouncing the motives of the employers, their profit-seeking, their fear of loss, and—what, more than anything else, corrupts genuinely human feeling—the fear of being the dupe of one's own generosity. But were not the workers, in fact, actuated by the same base motives? Whenever they used bourgeois pettiness as an argument, they put themselves on the level of the bourgeoisie, instead of showing their ability to rise above it. It was pettiness that was killing the bourgeoisie as a governing class; those who wished to replace them should have proved themselves free of it. "Yes, we agree gladly to what is asked of us. We know perfectly well what is happening. We know the kind of failure that our belated sacrifice is to

remedy. We know that it will be useless if the employers fail to do more than their duty, as we are doing. But we are not bargaining and not arguing, we are setting the example that the others must be shamed into following. If the bourgeoisie is to rate its petty calculations and maneuvers higher than the common need, let them do so; we shall not follow them." This is the kind of language that would have shown the working class to be worthy of leadership. The nation would have called them to power or have welcomed their accession to it if only they had imposed themselves by their own greatness and crushed bourgeois mediocrity by the sheer force of their own nobility.

What I have said about war production could be applied in exactly the same way to other similar cases. The work on the 1937 Exhibition, for instance, would have provided one, but I prefer to choose my second example in a different field. From the time of the last war and the Treaty of Versailles, the idea of peace had occupied a preponderant place in Socialist and trade union propaganda. It could scarcely have been otherwise. The tragic futility of war had never been more cruelly evident; the heroism, the slaughter, and the victory had led only to immeasurable disappointment. But what, in fact, were the arguments used in the pacifist propaganda of the Teachers' Union and some sections of the Socialist party? They were based on a belief in the sanctity of individual life. This is undoubtedly a concept of great purity and nobility,

which has been and still is the basic principle of whole civilizations, but it is essential that it be read as a precept—"Thou shalt not voluntarily deprive any other man of his life"—and not as a commandment—"Thou shalt at all costs save thine own skin." Man must know the value of human life, but he must also know how to subordinate it to ideal ends, or, in other words, to the collective ends of justice, human liberty, national independence, peace itself—for peace is one of the necessary goals of humanity, the most necessary of all, perhaps, in the sense that it is a condition of almost all the others. Subordination of this kind means, in practice, sacrifice; and a revolutionary propaganda that can no longer teach it has allowed itself to become cheapened and debased; it may drag out some kind of existence in normal times, but it fails entirely in times of tension, anxiety, or danger.

Experience teaches that in critical times men can save their lives only by risking them. In the same way, a nobler propaganda would have shown that in the face of the danger that threatened Europe peace could be preserved only at the cost of deliberately and courageously risking war. The Treaty of Versailles had not disarmed Europe, but the Hitlerite Revolution had rearmed it. Now, in an armed Europe, there was no other way of conquering war than through an armed organization for mutual assistance, and assistance pacts could be effective only if the peoples of all the signatory countries proved their readiness to honor their signatures with their

blood. "We will not die for Danzig," was the cry, but dying for Danzig meant dying for peace, and peace could not be saved unless men were ready to die for it. And so Socialists and Trade Unionists had been more than right in preaching peace, but they had cheapened both their teaching and themselves by their infusion into it of the elements of selfishness and false realism. Courage and the spirit of self-sacrifice are not remnants of barbarism. What *is* barbaric is the purpose to which men still put these qualities. They are great and virile virtues that must still be cultivated, for no future can be built without them, and it is by them that a people recognize its leaders in the critical moments of history.

When a Socialist speaker was addressing a working-class audience, he rarely finished without an exhortation along lines something like these: "Working men, come in and join us! But let me first tell you what you are promising to do if you do join our party. You are undertaking to set an example always and everywhere, to be a model to others and to inspire them by the example of your conduct. In the factory you must set the pace in ability and conscientiousness. The private life and the working life of every member of the party have a propaganda value in themselves to the party as a whole. Help us to prove to our enemies that to make men free is to make them live better lives." That is how the Socialist movement interpreted its creed to its own members, but it failed to inter-

pret it in its own corporate life. The party too should have proved itself better, nobler, and worthier than all others in public activities, in its political doctrines and in the ethical motives that lay behind them; it too should have been a model to other parties and the whole nation, an example of the pride, the complete disinterestedness, the greatness of mind and spirit that are the proper mark of youthful strength. It was our duty to aim always at the highest and renounce every kind of base or doubtful method, even if such methods were being used against us. 'No aggression merely because others attack us, no insults merely because others insult us,' should have been our rule. We were not as other men, not on the same plane or at the same level of human development, and everything we did should have proved this. It was our duty not only to persuade men's minds, necessary though this was, but to go on from there to appeal to their emotions and kindle their imaginations.

There are questions I put to myself, after all the years I have given up to action and the more recent months devoted to scrupulous meditation. I ask myself if these failures are not the fault of the chosen leaders of the working class. Did they fully understand their mission? Did they do their whole duty? Had we grasped clearly enough the significance of Jaurès' attempt to transform Marxian logic? Marx had supplied the most powerful and invigorating stimulus to the working-class struggle by his teaching that the inevitable evo-

lution of history was on our side. But the inevitable is not necessarily just, and its results may not always be satisfying to reason and conscience. It was Jaurès who added to Marx the demonstration that the social revolution is not merely the inexorable consequence of economic evolution, but would satisfy also the eternal demands of man's reason and conscience. So, in his view, Socialism was to become the realization and the justification of the glorious watchwords of the French Revolution, "the Rights of Man and the Citizen" and "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," and through Socialism the heroism of the fighters for democracy, whose struggles have filled Europe and the world for a century, would find its highest expressions and its triumph. Thus Jaurès infused into the materialist conception of history all the idealism of the creeds of democracy and human brotherhood.

Did we make enough of this idealist teaching in our day-to-day propaganda? Were we emphatic enough in refusing in all circumstances to have recourse to the cruder instincts of the human animal, to brutality, envy, and malice? Did we remember always to appeal only to the nobler sentiments of the human mind, to its inborn need of justice, affection, and fraternity? It is often argued that it is useless to change social institutions until the mentality of the individual has changed, and the argument has too often been a convenient justification for the indefinite postponement of necessary changes. But have we, in fact, done what lay in our power to change the

individual human unit, while we tried to change society? Did we carry on the two tasks together as we should have done, so that they intermingled and supported each other? These are some of the questions I ask myself, and although my own conscience does not reproach me overviolently, I hesitate to give a categorical answer. In the early days of Socialist propaganda, fierce and implacably combative as it was, we reached greater moral heights. We fought together against danger, in a common spirit of self-sacrifice that exalted our faith. Jaurès too had lived in permanent danger of prison and assassination. Then the risks grew less, and faith was dulled. We had become too strong and less careful, we had slipped gradually into the mold of ordinary life. We had become too successful, and when the time came, when the nation was waiting for a rallying cry, a call to action, there was none in our ranks great enough to voice it.

An English thinker, whose system is not unlike that of Marx, has maintained that in the march of history moral forces play only a negligible part. In his view, the intellectual forces controlling material progress are the only important factors in evolution. The human race, he claims, has been living for some three thousand years on the same almost unchanging stock of moral ideas, which appear and reappear in almost the same form in every religion and every philoso-

phy. But humanity itself has changed startlingly during this period, and one must therefore conclude that its variations cannot be related to a practically unvarying cause. I am not setting out to contest this theory, which no doubt contains some element of truth. It may well be that the idea of perpetual progress is as foreign to morals as it is, for instance, to art, while it remains an absolute law for pure thought, science, and technical subjects. But even if their progress is not parallel, it must at least be admitted that the persistence and consistency of what may be called a particular moral atmosphere are among the necessary conditions of intellectual progress. This atmosphere, this set of convictions and beliefs, has, indeed, been the common property of all humanity since the beginning of our civilization, and they constitute the moral environment outside which all intellectual progress—and therefore all material progress too—would have been impossible. It is easy to believe that intellectual progress does not always keep step with moral progress, but it is difficult to see how moral retrogression can fail to lead to a similar intellectual loss. Nazism in Germany is a proof of this. In a society whose principles have required it to stifle the instincts of justice and charity, break the bonds of family and friendship, and destroy respect for human life, which sees fanaticism, cruelty, and denunciation as duties, the permanent moral background that had protected and cherished the forward march of the mind sud-

denly ceases to exist. The result is an abortion of what had been growing up to that point. Turning back to a barbarian morality means returning slowly to barbarian thought and life. But we never learned, like the Spartans, to watch the "drunken Helot," and profit from his example.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

I SHALL CONCLUDE these reflections by trying only to sum up and put in order the conclusions to which they have led me.

A ruling class and a political system have succumbed under the impact of events, as if they had gone down in the upheaval of revolution. That has happened before in French history without the country's being any the worse for it. Feudal aristocracy, monarchy based on divine right, both disappeared. Today, since a country cannot live without laws, France is faced with the immediate task of creating new institutions. There is nothing new about the principles on which these institutions will be based; they are known and laid down in advance. The French people are almost unanimous in their hope that the world war will end in a worldwide victory for democracy. The constitutional problem, therefore, is essentially a simple one. A weak and perverted

bourgeois democracy has collapsed, and must be replaced by a true democracy, an energetic and competent democracy, popular instead of capitalist, strong instead of weak.

I am no constitution-maker; that is a task I leave to the specialists. But I have, I think, established two incontrovertible truths in the course of these arguments. The first is that parliamentary government is by no means necessarily either the only or the purest form of democracy; the second is that the faults for which the French parliamentary system is so often blamed are in reality the shortcomings and the vices of the French bourgeoisie. I do not intend to try to define what should be the role of the representative or parliamentary principle in a popular democracy. I claim only that, whatever be the function allotted to the legislative Chambers when the distribution of powers in the future Republic takes place, there can be no question of any attack on the elective principle nor on universal suffrage, which is the very symbol of democracy. To attempt to get rid of them would be to attack the deepest roots of French political tradition. On the other hand, the representative principle, using that term in its narrowest sense—that is, in the sense of the wholesale delegation of popular sovereignty to an elected House, and its expression through the sole medium of legislative assemblies—will, in all probability, not survive the experiment in bourgeois democracy that has now lasted more than a century.

My personal preference is for some system along American

or Swiss lines—that is, founded on the separation and balance of powers. This means that sovereignty is divided and the executive can exercise within its own sphere an independent and unbroken authority. These systems have given rise to stable governments and have, in addition, the great advantage of substituting for the somewhat fictitious concept of governmental responsibility, which has always loomed too large in our country, the much more real principle of supervision of the executive by the legislative.

Still following the American and Swiss models, I should like this conception of the functions of a central government to be allied to a strongly centrifugal development, which I would carry, indeed, to the point at which it becomes federalism. I have never been afraid of federalism. The individual states in America, the cantons in Switzerland, have both retained some share of democratic sovereignty, and they maintain the fires of local political life. They offer the public-spirited citizen adequate opportunities for a free and useful political life in his own locality. I am reminded, in this context, of life as it was lived in our former provinces. Moreover, I have always been attracted by the ideas put forward by Rathenau after the German collapse of 1918. Functional devolution has always seemed to me as essential as decentralization. In other words, a single executive authority, a single legislative body can no longer deal adequately with all the aspects of life in a modern state. We are led logically, therefore, to

envisage the central authority, whose primary task is one of general direction and co-ordination, as becoming progressively surrounded by smaller satellite authorities with special fields of action, within which they have a limited independence. Totalitarian Germany has in part put this system into practice. There is a German *Führer*, but each region and each of the main functions of the state have their own *Führer*, each with a very real measure of autonomy. Our problem, therefore, is to reconstruct within the framework of democracy the institutions that Nazi Germany adapted to a system of personal dictatorship. But I do not want to dwell too long on this kind of problem. It is permissible to argue about the data, but no useful purpose is served by discussions regarding possible solutions of the problem; those France must find for herself.

The second point I want to make is that this popular democracy will be, indeed can only be, a Social Democracy. That is the condition of future stability. There can, in logic, be no divorce between political and economic authority. The political power of the bourgeois class was derived from its economic power. It has now been stripped of that political power, and if economic power—which the bourgeoisie proved no less incapable of using for the good of the community—were to remain in its hands, then France would be exposed to the most dangerous risks. There would, almost certainly, be a

new period of disturbance and impotence, a new series of upheavals, perhaps even of revolutions. Yet, although, up to now, the bourgeoisie has made only fumbling and hesitating attempts to use its economic privileges, it still retains legal and theoretical possession of them. This disequilibrium must be removed. There must be progressive, legal expropriation, carried out by peaceful means, but none the less ruthless in its action. Indeed, it will be, in reality, not expropriation but appropriation. Our task today is to rewrite the phrase used by Thiers and Dufaure of the Third Republic so that it reads, "The people's Republic will be a Social Republic or it will be nothing."

There is, indeed, no way of evading the social problem when the facts themselves render its solution so urgent. How shall we continue to tolerate a system in which men have neither sufficient food, nor healthy houses, nor the wherewithal to protect their families from hunger, cold, illness, and vice? Can we tolerate such a system in the future? Will the younger generation be prepared to accept the existence of social scourges as if they were acts of God? Most assuredly they will not. They are resolved to face them, and to master them, though they know that the task is an heroic one. But how can they be got rid of, except within the framework of a Social Democracy? Any system that involves the abolition of the wage-earning class—that is, the disappearance of the worker's dependence on the employer to whom he must sell

his labor—is bound to move toward a society in which the producers of all kinds work together, in the positions in which they are most useful to the community, for the production and consumption of wealth. The process may or may not be conscious, but it can end only in the creation of a collectivist system. It is easy to talk glibly about the abolition of the wage-earning class, but it is more important to realize all that the term really implies. Even if the solution that France adopts leaves intact the framework of capitalist society, and consequently preserves a wage-earning class, the worker's absolute right to a wage will still have to be recognized, and by "a wage" I mean a "living wage," the minimum earnings necessary to maintain not only physical life, but also the full life of a free citizen and of his family. For I maintain that the wages of the working man must be sufficient to maintain himself and his family, and I strongly object to the present position, in which the home is kept going only by the addition of the earnings of his wife and children. That takes us right into State Socialism, for it is obvious that the power of the state will have to be used to define, protect, and guarantee the status of the worker. What we shall have to do is to translate into real social conditions the ideals that became current as revolutionary slogans in 1848—"the right to live, the right to work, the organization of labor." Whichever of these two courses we adopt, the task of organizing and regulating production will still fall on the government. And, whatever form

of government we adopt, it will still be unable to evade the responsibility of organizing and planning production, for the result of inadequate or chaotic production will be civil war.

Then there will arise other problems, whose solution will be no less imperative. The march of scientific and technical progress means the production of an ever increasing amount of wealth in an ever shorter time. This progress is not the achievement of any one individual. It is the common heritage and therefore the collective property of humanity, for it embraces and results from the accumulated labor of successive generations of human beings. Bourgeois capitalism was incapable of distributing this abundant wealth among the mass of consumers and so got rid of it by means of periodic slumps and deliberate deflation. Under capitalism progress had become a source of excessive profits for the privileged or the lucky few, and of unemployment and poverty for the immense majority of men. Progress belongs to all men, and we must willy-nilly find a way to make it benefit all men. Our present-day rulers have talked a great deal about the desirability of the worker's having some share in the profits of the firm that employs him. That means little or nothing, but there is another kind of profit-sharing that must and will come; it is the one that gives to the majority of the nation a share in the benefits for whose creation society as a whole is responsible, each worker receiving his dividends in the form of an increase in his well-being or a reduction of his working hours.

Nor can increased production be reduced purely to a question of industrial research, machine tools, and "rationalization." The optimum point is reached only when each job is done by the one person whose physical or mental aptitudes are most suited to do it. The organization of labor implies the greatest possible degree of planned specialization, and consequently of education and selection. The needs of production will therefore themselves require the democracy of tomorrow to introduce real equality, in the form of those institutions that are, in my view, the be-all and the end-all of Socialism.

This real equality in no way ignores natural inequalities. On the contrary, it takes full account of them and indeed makes use of them. True equality means the proper utilization of every human being, carefully fitted into his own appropriate niche in the community. It means rating all functions equally highly, since all are, in a sense, equally useful. Under bourgeois capitalism it was possible to move from one social class to another, and examples of such transfers were quoted with complacency. But these interchanges between classes were accidents, exceptions to the normal working of the rules of society. For a worker to acquire capitalist property was a miracle; for a bourgeois to revert to manual wage-laborer was a catastrophe. The democracy of the future must know how to get the best out of every man by using his natural aptitudes without reference to class distinctions—that is, without taking into consideration the caste, birth, race, or fortune, either of

the man himself or of his parents or ancestors. The son of a blacksmith must be able to become prime minister or an industrial leader, as he can today, but the son of the industrial leader or minister must be a blacksmith, if that is what he is best suited for.

There is nothing new in these ideas; trade unions and Socialist parties preached them before the war. At a given stage of material evolution, just as at a given stage of scientific research, the same problems present themselves to the minds of all. Like Fascism and Nazism before it, the political system that calls itself the "National Revolution" itself declares that they must be solved. But I cannot say too clearly or too often that France intends to solve them by herself and\* by democratic methods. In France at least, political and social democracy are inseparable terms. Political democracy cannot survive if it does not develop into social democracy; social democracy would be neither true nor stable if it were not based on political democracy. The French people will not consent to sacrifice the great human ideals laid down in 1789 to the major imperatives that material reality has added to them since then, or vice versa; they want to combine economic order and social equality with political, civil, and personal liberty. The task is a difficult one, but they intend to see it through themselves, using the political power that they have won in a hard struggle and that nothing will induce them to relinquish. They refuse to accept these things ready-made,

from the hands of rulers whom they have not chosen, and whose credentials they do not recognize. They demand justice and do not ask for charity; indeed, they know too well that justice can never be doled out from above, like alms to the poor. They have discovered that in other countries Nazi and Fascist autocracies reduced labor to slavish routine, but did nothing to suppress the privileges of the capitalist property-owner. Even in France they can see that if the slogans with which they are bombarded were honestly translated into action, then the whole bourgeois structure would be destroyed, and they know that if it is not, it is because the inventors of the slogans are themselves bourgeois, convinced of the importance of their class and doing all they can to preserve it. The achievement of the political sovereignty of the people is therefore a concept and a task indissolubly allied to the parallel concept of social justice. The foundation of a Social Democracy in the full meaning of the term, which was yesterday's hope, has become tomorrow's program.

That is my second conclusion. Now for the third. Just as political democracy in France must develop into social democracy if it is to survive and be stable, so French social democracy, to survive and be stable, must be integrated in a European order, or rather—since the present war has still further diminished Europe's place on the map of the world—in a human or universal order. Democracy implies social democracy, and

social democracy implies internationalism in the noblest sense of that term. Here again we shall find that the conclusion is a logically inescapable and necessary deduction from the facts. The establishment of a Social Democracy implies, by definition, a number of measures whose effect is to transform either the legal notion of property, or, as a minimum, the conditions of working-class life and the control of the nation's economy. Now it is evident that measures of this kind cannot be introduced within the very limited field of a single country without disturbance, damage, and even the risk of failure. As long as a nation's economy is ruled by the laws of competition of international trade, as long as it seeks markets and is itself a market, its equilibrium must be that of its environment, and its economic environment is a world economy. It is bound by the laws and customs that bind all others outside its own boundaries, and if it runs counter too boldly to this universal code, then every infringement will make it liable to severe commercial and financial penalties, and so, in consequence, to political penalties too. A reforming nation can avoid these penalties in only two ways. Either it must cut its communications with the outside world, stop the normal working of competition and international trade, and seal itself hermetically within the framework of a despotic autarchy—as Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany did—or it must accept the fact that it is no more than one part of a great whole and suit its own actions to those dictated by the international community.

France dislikes the first solution; she must therefore devote all her energies to securing the triumph of the second.

If we go back a few years, it becomes clear that the Popular Front government, set up in France in the middle of 1936 under a Socialist prime minister, found itself facing precisely these two alternatives, although its program had not included any very revolutionary social measures. It is, of course, also true that it was the victim of a form of political mendacity—by which I mean that in spite of appearances the government did not in reality possess complete power; its authority was incomplete so long as the law allowed a hostile bourgeoisie to occupy important and powerful positions. But the fundamental and almost insoluble difficulty was the fact that the changes which it made in the condition of the workers and in the social structure could have been put into effect with ease and certainty only within the framework either of an international organization or of a self-sufficing, totalitarian system. Alas! The world was not ripe for the first solution. If only it had been possible to give to the French example the capacity to inspire, as it had done in the great days of '89! If only we could have kindled throughout Europe the flame of enthusiasm, whose contagion Michelet has described with such lyrical reverence! But the reality was very different; Europe was skeptical and hostile. Never since the signing of the Treaty of Versailles had she been farther removed from idealistic enthusiasm and, in consequence, from unity. She

had neither coherence nor confidence nor any concord of opinion, and, as she sullenly prepared for fresh battles, she closed her mind automatically to all thoughts of collective organization. As for the second solution, the dictatorial imposition of a closed economy, that was excluded in advance for a government that set out, as a part of the struggle against Fascism, to rekindle love of democracy in France and revive its principles and practice. The Popular Front government was thus confronted by an inherent contradiction, which its leaders, indeed, understood and expected, and to which they sacrificed themselves (if the term is permissible) in order to save the country from bloodshed. I recall this item of past history only in order to make my point clearer and to predict more accurately what is likely to happen in the future. For tomorrow, as yesterday, policies inspired by the same spirit will encounter similar obstacles. Tomorrow, as yesterday, the only satisfactory solution, the only one, at any rate, that is compatible with free institutions and the principles of liberty, will be to knit national achievements into the framework of an international organization, to fit them into a structure covering all those parts of the universal economy that have reached the same stage of evolution.

We must, then, assume as a fact that any Social Democracy in France will of necessity be based on an international organization. It would be useless to try to create one except on this basis, and if, by some miracle, it were created, it would not be

viable, for it would be swept away the very next time a threat of war tore Europe apart once more. Almost inevitably, as the history of the last twenty-five years proves, it would collapse either under the direct onslaught of war or among its preparations and consequences, and victory, in this respect, would be only a little less pernicious than defeat. And how are we to do away permanently with wars and threats of wars without a solidly established international organization? How are we to create a lasting spirit of solidarity? How can we arouse the complex feelings which necessarily precede such a state of mind and which we sum up in the term "security"? The history of the last twenty-five years gives us the answer to those questions too. Immediately after every great world-wide upheaval there comes a brief period of rationality when these great tasks can be accomplished, and it is essential that the opportunity be seized, for it passes quickly, and seized with decision and enthusiasm, with firm hope and faith. After a world war all mankind is anxious that the scourge whose recent marks it still bears shall vanish from the face of the earth forever. We have learned how important it is to encourage this almost unanimous desire, to give it strength, durability, efficacy, and we know what a price we paid for our failure to do so last time. Posterity will never forgive us if we make the same mistake all over again; we must be ready and firmly resolved to act this time.

The war will end one day, and that day may come soon. It

will end inevitably in the overwhelming defeat of the Axis powers. But that alone will not create the conditions of a lasting peace. Any peace is, to a greater or lesser extent, a *Diktat* imposed by the victor on the vanquished. I have never approved the severity of the criticism of the authors of the Treaties of Versailles; never throughout history did representatives of victorious powers make so great an effort to give a foundation of justice to a new organization of society which had been created by force. Yet the Treaties of Versailles left a heritage of mistakes, illogicalities, and wrongs to be paid for in torrents of blood. I am sure that those who are responsible for the future peace will be imbued, even more than were the statesmen of Versailles, with the spirit of equity, with the will to build a peace on the unshakable foundations of justice and even—I would add—of human charity. Yet we can be sure, in advance, that this future peace also will not be without flaws, that it will not be perfect, that it too will leave a heritage of unsolved and recurrent problems, of wrongs uprighted or righted only at the cost of creating fresh injuries. Let us look for a moment at the undertakings entered into during the course of the war, dictated by the necessities of war, and ultimately to be consolidated by victory, at the claims founded on the *status quo ante*, or on strategic needs, or on the need of access to the sea; let us consider all the inextricably intermingled questions of racial and ethnic minorities, which Hitler solved so simply by extermination or forced migration. If the

warlike spirit persists, if it is not replaced or mastered by the institutions of peace, then, inevitably, the treaties that end this war will contain in themselves motives—and sometimes even legitimate motives—for acts of reparation or revenge. Territorial claims will inevitably crop up sooner or later and will be backed by force if the whole conception of frontiers does not gradually lose caste, does not shed, bit by bit, some of its present importance, through the close incorporation of nations in an international body, competent, among other things, to undo any obvious mistakes and to make the appropriate legal changes when the *de facto* situation has been too radically altered. On one point my convictions are profound and unshakable, whatever the world may say. If this war does not at last give rise to fundamentally stable international institutions, to a really effective international power, then it will not be the last war. Europe and the world will again be exposed to this scourge, and the whole structure of political and social democracy, whether on the national or international plane, will be threatened with ruin, and this time perhaps with irrevocable ruin.

International organization, a European order, these are expressions that today are on everyone's lips. The totalitarian dictators and their followers never make a speech or deliver a message without invoking the European Order. In France the men of the armistice, its theorists, executants, and apolo-

gists, are never tired of explaining to us that they have betrayed France in order to remain faithful to Europe and thus to international Socialism. It is hardly necessary for me to say once again how utterly I repudiate the abominable abuse of expressions drawn from the vocabulary of our Socialist movement. When Hitler and Goebbels talk of organizing Europe, when the French "collaborators" echo their words, we know what they mean and what they want. In present realities their European Order is nothing but the utilization of all European resources, the extraction and extortion of all we have, for the benefit of the Axis, and their so-called organization of Europe is no more than the future total enslavement of Europe by the Nazi regime. Thus the same words are used with diametrically opposite meanings. When *we* talk of a European Order, we are thinking not of war but of peace; when we talk of European organization, we are thinking not of a common subjection to the domination of a tyrant, but of the federation of free and equal nations, of a League of Nations! Let us not be afraid to admit that the ideal of 1919 was a fine one. It is cheap and easy today to mock at the League, but if we have the courage to ignore the mockery, we must agree that we shall yet have to return to the same inspiration.

As it was conceived at the end of the last war by all the great democrats of both hemispheres, the League of Nations was a noble and magnificent creation. I believe this to be true in spite of its failure, which I do not seek in any way to mini-

mize or excuse. I remain convinced, despite its failure, that it would still be sufficient and able to impose respect for international order among those political societies that gave it birth. Its failure, moreover, was something from which the world will have to learn its lesson. The League of Nations, created by the Treaties of Versailles, failed because great powers like Russia and the United States, whose support was essential, were outside it from the start. It failed because its founders, trying to disarm suspicions here and fears there, did not dare to give it the instruments and the living strength that it needed to function properly. It failed because it was not itself a great sovereign power, distinct from national sovereign powers and greater than they; because it had neither the political authority nor the material force to enable it to carry out its decisions and impose its will on national states; because its powers were too restricted and too intermittent to allow it to cover the same fields of activity as national sovereign states. It would be easy to quote arguments and facts in support of each of these reasons. If we take the antithesis of each of them, we shall have outlined the principles which must be applied this time in order to have a living and effective international organization. All the great powers, and particularly America and Russia, must be parties to the new covenant. The international body must have the institutions and the powers it needs to do what it is created to do; in other words, it must be boldly and openly set up as a super-state on a level above

national sovereignties, and that, in turn, means that the member states must have accepted in advance as much limitation and subordination of their particular sovereignties as this superior sovereign power requires. The international body must be in a position to see that refractory nations carry out its decisions, which means that it must have a superiority of force, arising either from the exclusive right to use certain weapons, such as military planes, or from an adequate degree of disarmament by the member states. The super-state must have its own organs of government and a policy of its own, instead of being governed by conferences of delegates, each of whom is still serving the interests and obeying the instructions of the state he represents. It must be kept permanently at work by the multiplicity of its functions, for a real international community is more than just a court of arbitration or a meeting-place for diplomats. It must create an international order if it intends to preserve peace, and to do so its activity must be continuous, for economic conflicts and crises will threaten its order just as surely as political disagreements.

The founders of the League of Nations, well aware of this need for continuous action, set up the complementary institution known as the International Labor Office. But the I.L.O. had even less power to make and carry out decisions than the League itself. This time the international body must have authority enough to enforce its decisions on all the labor problems that, as I have shown elsewhere, cannot be satis-

factorily solved by nations acting separately. It must be prepared to lay down rules and give decisions on the urgent problems of markets, raw materials, population movements, which lie so dangerously along the frontiers of economics and politics. It must settle customs questions, find a remedy for the general currency crisis, perhaps by introducing an international currency. It must have the means to operate great public-works schemes on an international plane—public health, industrial equipment, transport, and colonization schemes in the widest sense of the term—so that little by little nations can be raised to the same level of civilization. And to this end it must be empowered to issue loans, have its own budget, derived no longer from the miserable voluntary contributions of member states, but from low taxes on articles of general consumption, or from its ownership of certain international monopolies. Immediately after the last war a number of Socialists met at Frankfort. Among them were two now dead—Matteotti, murdered by Mussolini, and Hilferding, handed over to Hitler by the French government—and the others represented all the belligerent nations. They met to study the problem of reparations, but they produced, and at that date, a plan similar to the one I have just outlined.

All these suggestions could easily be amplified and justified from the most recent textbook of world history. But if we really want to put our finger on the weakness and precari-

ousness of any peace that is not based on a strong international structure, we have only to look at the German and Russian problems. Hitler will be beaten and what then happens to him is of little importance; but when he has collapsed and disappeared from the scene, what will the victors do with his country? They will find themselves facing a dilemma that is not capable of being intelligently resolved in the Europe we now know—that is, in a Europe of independent sovereign powers. On the one hand, the general consensus of opinion, embittered, alas, by hatred and the desire for vengeance, which Hitler has called forth throughout the whole world, will be that Germany must this time be rendered forever incapable of entering on another terrible adventure such as we have just experienced. There will be a refusal—legitimate, I agree—to distinguish between the tyrant who has deceived a whole nation and the nation that pitilessly served the tyrant, and men will protest that peace is no more than a lying and cruel simulacrum, if the world is not fully protected against future irruptions of German barbarism. All that will be natural and reasonable. Yet, if we look at the well-worn track of history and think in terms of independent sovereign nations, then it is surely clear that these natural and reasonable demands can lead only to divisions, dismemberments, annexations, restrictions, and indemnities. This no doubt is what will be demanded, and the most clamorous voices will be those of some of our present collaborators. On the other hand, if the men

who are responsible for making the peace have the courage to reflect and look back, they must surely realize what the future would hold for a world order founded on force and its abuse. Hatred cannot banish hatred, nor violence put an end to violence. A whole nation cannot simply be annihilated with its language, traditions, and legends. Might abused breeds a spirit of revenge that time will not efface, and sooner or later the hazards of victory will offer it unexpected opportunities. However harsh the conditions imposed on Hitler's Germany, they can hardly be more so than those that were imposed on Prussia after Jena. Who could have foretold that after such disaster and such mutilation Prussia would recover her strength? Yet only a few years after Jena came Leipzig, and only a few decades separated Tilsit and Sedan. There is only one way to resolve the contradiction, to make Germany harmless in a peaceful and stable Europe, and that is to incorporate the German nation in an international community powerful enough to re-educate her, discipline her, and, if necessary, master her. If it should become necessary to use force in order to compel Germany to enter such a community, then the use of force would be as legitimate and as salutary as a paternal rebuke, for it would be used in the service of justice and peace. In those circumstances time and custom would bring adaptation and co-ordination, and so lead to pacification and reconciliation.

What I have said of Germany is no less patently true of

Russia, though for quite different reasons. Already the Russian problem and the Russian enigma is casting its cloud over the face and the very hope of peace. I have already pointed out that there are countries, chief among which comes France, in which normal government becomes virtually impossible if a section of the working class remains either directly or indirectly dependent on a foreign power. Similarly, it will be virtually impossible to preserve a stable place among the nations of Europe and of the world, if they are continually disturbed by risks of an internal revolution, prepared and engineered from outside by the same power. What future can there be for either democracy or peace if such a serious difficulty cannot be removed? For my part, I do not think that it will be removed as a result of some modification in the Soviet system of government; it is unrealistic to imagine that there is enough contact between Russia and other countries to enable a common level to be established. Russia will, no doubt, retain all the essential characteristics of her present system; she is unlikely to modify either her system of property or her form of government in order to fall into line with the rest of the world. On the other hand, her outward conduct, her behavior toward other powers, will be found to have changed considerably, as a result both of the prestige won in her heroic struggle and of the consolidation and recognition of her strength that victory will bring her. Russia will come out of the war cured of the growing pains from which she has been suffering for

the last twenty-five years, confident of her strength, more powerful and less afraid, and in consequence able to make the necessary effort to co-operate in international life without provoking new discords that are themselves a threat to peace.

What are we entitled to expect of Russia? That she shall no longer maintain alien elements within other nations and no longer behave toward other nations as if she were herself alien to them—in other words, that she shall give up her provocative policy of ignoring all the traditional concepts of morality and humanity. There can and must be a concordat covering difficulties of this kind. It should lay down rules for the co-operation of Russia with the rest of the world, and we may perhaps hope that its provisions will be fixed and their observance ensured by the arbitration and persuasive pressure of the international organization itself, of which Russia will be a member. I use the word “concordat” intentionally, and yet with some hesitation. I am, of course, fully aware that it has been used hitherto to describe an agreement between a government and the Roman Catholic Church, and I do not want the associations which it conjures up to offer any susceptibilities. But if we look at it objectively, it must surely be clear that what I am suggesting here is precisely an agreement between nation-states and a temporal Church, delimiting the respective domains of national sovereignty and of orthodox belief. I think that a Russia that keeps the Soviet system would nevertheless

agree to a compromise of this kind, and I base my confidence on the fact that it is clearly in her interests to do so. She will neither want nor be able to isolate herself from the Anglo-Saxon powers, without whose assistance she could not have defeated Nazi aggression, and without whose continued cooperation she will be unable to restore her ravaged economy. For the Soviet Union, incorporation in an international body will mean full, unreserved, and unqualified recognition of her position as an equal, which is something that her leaders have wanted for a long time and that no country has so far granted her—not even those who have signed treaties and negotiated agreements with her. Finally, Russia will be anxious that none shall outpace her, in the eyes of the workers of the world, in the quest for peace, and she knows that enthusiasm for international organization will be considered the most visible and certain evidence of her determination to get it. I would add, indeed, that only in this way can Russia counterbalance the weight of responsibility for the war that now lies so heavily upon her. If by isolationism or intolerance she were to obstruct the work of building up a lasting peace, she would undo the immense services that her heroism has rendered to humanity and so would revert to the position that she held in the eyes of the civilized world in September 1939, on the morrow of that criminal blunder whose very memory must be wiped out.

Both association of ideas and the logic of my argument lead me at this point to consider the desirability of including in the international body another member, the Vatican, the Holy See. The inclusion of the Holy See on exactly the same terms as nation-states would be the most striking indication that in the world of tomorrow temporal powers will not be the only ones to count. If the Vatican were to consent to active co-operation, all its disputes with governments, which now disturb the internal politics of so many countries and lead to intolerable conflicts, could be treated on a higher level and settled by general concordats. A Church which is pacific both by definition (since it is the incarnation of a religion of peace) and by constitution (since it is organized on an international basis) would surely be suitably employed in this way. Papal influence, as it has always been, is still used on the side of lasting peace, founded on justice, on equality of men and nations, and on the sanctity of contract. The first public speech made by Pope Pius XI from the balcony of St. Peter's after the Lateran treaties was a pathetic plea for peace.

The Church needs peace, and the work of organizing peace needs, no less, the support of the Church. But if the Catholic Church, alone of all faiths in the regions forming part of the international community, is organized as a centralized and world-wide hierarchy, it is far from being the only one to which many men subscribe. The principle of equality between religions, as between nation-states, must, therefore, be recog-

nized, and all must be invited on an equal footing. It will be difficult to work out a satisfactory method of representation, for other religions are not organized hierarchically like an empire, as is the Catholic Church. But, assuming that difficulties of this kind can ultimately be overcome, as I believe they can, we are bound logically to conclude that the insuperable obstacle would be the Catholic Church itself. No doubt the Church will be warmly and helpfully sympathetic in its attitude to the international experiment, but will nevertheless in all probability not become an active partner, will not undertake specific obligations, or impose duties upon herself. Is it conceivable that she would accord equality of rights, or even *de facto* recognition, to other religions that she regards as heretical or pagan? Could she agree to a kind of sharing out of the sum of human faith, when divine revelation has promised her that in the end she shall win over all men's souls, so that to abandon her right to them would be to renounce her divinely appointed mission? Could she accept the supremacy of a super-state, abandon to it some of her sovereignty, when in her own view the mere fact of her existence makes her herself supreme? In a word, could she take her share of responsibility for an international organization other than one whose principles were laid down by herself?

If we turn from the field of principle to that of practice, if we consider that the day-to-day work of an international community would be to settle disputes, pass judgments, to define,

and perhaps apply sanctions, then surely the Church could not consent, even as a member of the international community, to side with one state against another—that is, with some of the faithful against others—when she considers herself to be the mother of all. Both during the last war and this she refused to do so; how, then, could she do so in peacetime?

When I examined the position of the Russians, I assumed that the temporal interests of the Russian state would take precedence over the rigid requirements of Communist doctrine, but I can make no such assumption in the case of the Papacy, for the Papacy no longer has any temporal burdens. A sixteenth-century Pope, who had an army, entered into coalitions, went to war, might perhaps have hesitated between some urgent need of the Papal states and the uncompromising rigors of Catholic doctrine, but today the Papacy can no longer be confronted by any such dilemma and has no need to consider these compromises. The Church is exclusively a spiritual power. That is precisely why her presence in the international community seems to me pre-eminently desirable, and precisely why I hold that it would be futile to hope for it.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

I FULLY REALIZE that to look forward in this way to an international society ruling the world of tomorrow is to arouse not only the facile skepticism of those who, at bottom, are only overcredulous (and who can therefore be left out of account), but also the perfectly honorable and legitimate feeling that we call patriotism. Patriotic feeling, always more acute and sensitive after a defeat, becomes, by the same fact of defeat, more touchy and more jealous. I can hear the objections that will be put forward: "What! France has not yet arisen from her ruins, her wounds are not yet healed, and you talk about Europe and the world! You invoke all over again the humanitarian softheartedness from which we have suffered so much in the past, and that at a time when our sense of patriotic duty should be our one clear-cut, imperative, and exclusive preoccupation. No! France first, France above all! France's only chance of salvation lies in the egoistic devotion of all her children."

It is true that in our country's misfortune we become more deeply and clearly conscious of the love we all bear her, even though at other times it may go unrecognized within us. It is true that the history of recent years ought to have taught us how to preserve all the natural dignity and vigor of patriotic feeling. And yet I believe that when I try to show that the Europe and the world of tomorrow must be organized within a larger framework than that of the nation if they are not once again to revert to chaos and war, I have said nothing that need offend, injure, or lessen patriotic feeling. I am not suggesting that patriotism must go, that it must give way, as if it were an old-fashioned instinct belonging to a past age and no longer corresponding to the aspirations of the modern mind. Nor do I think that it must be absorbed—which, in effect, means dissipated—in a more general and, if you like, more noble sentiment, such as faith in human solidarity, love of humanity. Love of country is eternal. It is on the same plane as love of family, love of one's native town or village, of all the fundamental realities that in our heart of hearts we hold nearest and dearest. But I am quite sure that there is nothing incompatible between patriotism and humanism—or, if you like, between national and international loyalties. Love of a nation and love of the human race, as one great man once said, can co-exist in the same conscience as naturally as patriotism and love of family, or as patriotism and religious belief.

For evidence of this we need look no further than the citi-

zens and soldiers of the Revolution of '89. It was not only their ideal, but their positive and well-considered intention, to set up one comprehensive human society, founded on universal principles. Yet never at any period in our history was patriotism more ardent and unyielding. Never was the soil of France defended with more heroic tenacity. The explanation is simple. It is that the irreducible basic element of any international structure must be free peoples, independent nations. The primary objective of every international community is to guarantee the liberty and independence of the separate nations of which it is made up. Nations will join together and organize themselves in communities, while yet remaining themselves, formed by their particular history and traditions, with their own tastes, preferences, national characteristics, and peculiarities. National characteristics are the necessary constituents of human harmony; they will be respected and, indeed, encouraged within the international organization, just as individual characteristics are preserved within the organization of society. In neither case does the existence of a community require, or even imply, any kind of official or compulsory uniformity. When I look forward to the future Comity of Nations, I cannot help recalling an expression of Hugo: "I see them," he said, "gathered around the common source of Justice and Peace like sisters round the fireside," sisters of the same blood, but distinguished from one another by their clothes, gestures, accent, and facial expres-

sions. Jaurès once said that while a little internationalism took one further away from patriotism, much internationalism brought one closer to it again. The real meaning of these words, as I understand them, is that the individuality of nations can flower most freely and luxuriantly in the serene atmosphere of peace and comfort which international solidarity carries with it, that men become conscious of its full value only when they can feel its impact in the deepest fibers of their being. I add, and with some pride, that this harmonizing of humanism and patriotism comes more naturally and easily to a Frenchman than to the citizens of any other nation, for it is a French characteristic, as I have already remarked, to understand—as France has always understood and still understands today—the noble urge to think and act for universal causes.

The risk of friction and internal conflict will, no doubt, still exist and will never be completely eliminated. It is not always an easy matter to order even one's personal life and place in proper hierarchy the diverse passions that make up a human character. But an effort of integrity and intelligence can usually find some way of harmonizing them, and that effort will almost always take the form of freeing either patriotism or humanism from the natural impurities that had corrupted it. For there is an instinct, as old as the history of men, akin to the spirit of the tribe or of the clan, which leads us to abandon and almost to condemn every attempt at ra-

tionality and objectivity where the relations of our own and other countries are concerned. "I do not need to look further; my country cannot be wrong, because it is my country." Or again: "My country is the natural and predestined leader of others. . . ." This instinct is mistakenly called patriotism, but it can be described accurately only by the pejorative terms of chauvinism and nationalism. It breeds arrogance and hatred, it holds sway in other countries just as it does in our own, and the conflicts between peoples to which it gives rise admit neither of arbitration nor—more important—of reconciliation. Alongside this instinct there is another sentiment, of much more recent origin, for it has developed only under the impetus of certain forms of revolutionary propaganda, that is the exact opposite of chauvinism. In any international dispute its exponents disavow in advance, on *a priori* principles, the attitude and interests of their country. "My country must be wrong, because it is my country." Those who hold such sentiments become alienated from the national community just as surely as the blind nationalists become imprisoned within it. But it would be wrong to describe it as internationalism; for in reality it is no more than inverted nationalism. Any attempt to distinguish real nationalism from chauvinism and real internationalism from inverted nationalism will reveal that the two authentic sentiments are not only compatible, but almost always co-existent. Real patriotism and internationalism both imply a readiness to judge international relations and

all the problems arising from them by the criteria of reason and moral principle, which are common to all men, and to do so, not with absolute impartiality—for that would be unnatural—but with an effort to achieve as much impartiality as is humanly possible. And, looking at the problem in this way, no honest man can fail to come to the conclusion that, at the present stage of human evolution, the liberty and the prosperity of one nation are virtually inseparable from those of others, and that love of country cannot, either rationally or emotionally, be separated from certain other beliefs which are valid for the whole human race.

The foundations of the new world should therefore be laid in this order: within the nation, political democracy will prove its worth and strengthen its position by becoming also a social democracy; together, the national democracies will maintain an international order that completes their structure and keeps a balance between them. When this war has freed humanity from the last convulsions of barbarism and despotism—and that will surely be the meaning and the result of the allied victory—men will have to turn their efforts toward the construction of some world order of this kind. It is in this sense that I interpret the Atlantic Charter, signed by Mr. Winston Churchill and President Roosevelt in the names of the two great Anglo-Saxon powers, and agreed to unreservedly by all the other allied states. The triumph of liberty

and justice in war will lead naturally to the organization of liberty and justice in peace. I can see, indeed, no other road for the world to take in its search, either for the satisfaction of its immediate needs or for the attainment of its future security.

I have given careful consideration to the possibility that in expressing this belief in the logic of history, I have perhaps erred on the side of overconfidence or have succumbed to the temptation, to which men who have been in public life are peculiarly prone, to cast the present and the future into the mold of the past. It is true that all that I have done, in outlining this picture of the world of the future, is to return to conceptions more than twenty-five years old, and that all my plans and hopes for the postwar years are merely a repetition of the hopes entertained by my contemporaries at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles—hopes which we showed ourselves, later, unable to realize. Why should the picture be original? While problems remain essentially the same, their solutions cannot be expected to undergo any fundamental modifications either. A generation cannot change at will the nature of the problems with which history is to confront it. On the other hand, it is no less true that progress such as I have outlined assumes peaceful labor, friendly understandings between nations, and a solidarity which approximates union, and I am fully aware that, to many minds, the realities of the future appear in a totally different light. "How," I shall be asked, "can you expect the ordered beauty of classical archi-

ture to spring from a soil that will be torn by popular upheavals, once peace has liberated the forces whose expansion has been so long held in check? No doubt humanity will discover some day an order of its own, but only after an inevitable period of dislocation and chaos and through means very different from the peaceful and considered will of nations! There has been too much misery and suffering, there will remain too much legitimate anger, and none of those can be appeased by the serene contemplation of an ideal! Then again, we shall certainly have to take account of the force of attraction exercised by the Soviet Union and of the natural prestige of a power which, if not the sole conqueror, was certainly the first to check the military might of Germany. We shall have to reckon with the work of propaganda and organization carried out in the face of every kind of danger by the Communist parties of all the occupied countries. Europe cannot escape a revolutionary crisis after the war, and it is from this crisis alone and by methods which, like the crisis itself, are essentially revolutionary, that justice and peace can be born." This is the kind of historical development that my arguments would seem to have left entirely out of account. I understand the views of those who think that this is what is most likely to happen, but I cannot share them.

Nor do I hold that war—and particularly a long war—creates a revolutionary situation, that it brings to victor and vanquished alike the opportunity to make a revolution.

Twenty-three years ago, in 1918, I found it difficult to accept this mechanical association of the conclusion of a war and the outbreak of a revolution, and today I have still no hesitation in rejecting it. Not that experience or age have deadened my revolutionary ardor. How, indeed, could a profession of revolutionary principles cause alarm to anyone, in an age when everyone, everywhere, including even the most barefaced reactionaries, is labeled "revolutionary"? I reject it because I perceive more and more clearly that the essence of all revolutions lies in their aims and achievements and not in the means by which they obtain their results. Any fundamental change in political structure—and so *a fortiori* in the systems governing production and property—even obtained by eminently legal and peaceful means, is a revolutionary process; violent insurrection, the seizure of power by force of arms, even terror, would be merely unsuccessful attempts at revolution if they did not bring about a clearly marked political or social transformation. Now, war can, in certain circumstances, create conditions favorable to insurrection and to the seizure of power, but it cannot create conditions favorable to revolutionary transformation. This conclusion reinforces my previous arguments, which gave us grounds for the fear that allied victory would be followed by a Communist propaganda campaign in France in favor of insurrectional violence. The most forcible and urgent collective feelings throughout Europe at that time will doubtless be much simpler than we

tend to assume. Men are the same everywhere, and what they want, first and foremost, is the satisfaction of the elementary human needs, material, emotional, and even intellectual, which war does not eliminate, though it makes them seem less important, and for which the coming of peace seems to promise immediate relief. Men have been separated from their families and forced to leave their homes, and they want to see them again. They have been hungry, and they want to eat their fill. They have been bound and gagged by every kind of violence and they want to live their own lives again and to speak their minds freely. For months and years they suffered from "the world's insomnia"; now they want peace and rest. These are the fundamental feelings that will emerge from the froth of demand, anger, and reprisal. There is only one collective need that a long war can inflame to the point of transforming it into a revolutionary passion, and that is quite simply the need of peace. It was this need that Communism exploited so efficiently, both inside and outside Russia, during the last stages of the last war and during the early postwar period, and that the leaders of the National Revolution did their best to exalt and to exploit before and after the armistice. It exists and will continue to exist for some time after victory has been won. Overtaxed and worn out by war, men will want to be sure—as they did in 1918—that their sacrifice is at least of some benefit to their children. Then it will be the duty of those who have some influence over them to take this potential enthusiasm,

to keep it alive, and so prevent it from exhausting itself in impotent convulsion during the period, in all probability short, before it is submerged by habit and routine.

It will not be difficult to convince the peoples of the world that true peace can be built up only on the threefold foundation of political democracy, social democracy, and international order. It is, indeed, almost mathematically certain that the work of world construction will move toward that goal, for its starting point will be the destruction of the totalitarian dictatorships and it will be controlled by the two greatest democracies in the world. Nor do I think that nations will take long, in the face of the overwhelming evidence, to realize that history is offering them a chance of a fresh start. Material obstacles have collapsed and will crumble at the first onslaught. The political power of the bourgeoisie no longer exists, and its economic power will, in all probability, vanish as soon as it is attacked. In France, and indeed throughout the European continent, the whole bourgeois structure is buried beneath its own ruins. In the great Anglo-Saxon countries the bourgeoisie has already consented to an infusion of new blood that is equivalent to abdication. The winds of history are favorable, and everywhere the workers are conscious of being carried by the tide. But this is where the real difficulty arises. Will they be worthy of their destiny? Will they be able to play the parts for which history has cast them? Will they

understand, or can they be made to understand, that favorable material conditions, even if they are overwhelmingly favorable, cannot alone carry them into power, much less keep them there? Can they understand that if, to seize power, they will need both the force and the authority that come from being in harmony with the nature and the trend of economic evolution, they will have no less need of dignity, of the ascendancy, in a word, that comes from moral superiority and efficiency? For a transfer of power to be consolidated and established before history, it must be acceptable to the conscience of mankind no less than to human emotion and to human reason. It must call forth from every sincere man the spontaneous tribute, "It had to be," but not that alone. He must also say, "It is right, it is good, and it is beautiful." Like all other peoples, the French people will fulfill their mission—in other words, they will build the world of their ideals—only if they show themselves able to cultivate and cherish in themselves those virtues that must be present to justify any form of human supremacy, the virtues of courage, generosity of heart, righteousness of mind and conscience, abnegation of self in favor of the good of all.

This is what we should be preaching. This is the task we ought now to be undertaking, and we may have only a short time in which to accomplish it. In human affairs new roads must be taken boldly and quickly. Otherwise there is always the danger that the attraction of the old ruts will be so strong

that men will be pulled back almost automatically into them. There is, therefore, not a moment to lose. Above all, it must be borne in mind that the effort will be incomplete and fruitless if it is limited to the sum of individual *examens de conscience*. The ethics of the group—of political, social, and moral groups—are no less real than individual ethics, and it is precisely the organs of collective life that need thorough moral renewal. It is evident, for example, that national democracy would undergo a sea change if the interplay of forces within the nation were not in the future to be judged according to criteria of good faith, integrity, and honor. Democracy everywhere presupposes freedom of action and, consequently, political conflict. But it does not follow that there are no rules in this civil conflict, that no holds are barred or that its ends justify any means, and this is as true of parties, social groups, and the press as it is of individuals. No advantage won, no plea of necessity, can justify lies, slander, dishonesty, the abuse of force, failure to fulfill obligations or to keep one's word. The argument becomes even stronger if we turn to the international order, for its foundations *must* be the belief in the validity and the sacredness of contracts; if that foundation is lacking, it is built on sand and must collapse. No doubt contracts will still be violated in the international sphere, just as crimes are still committed in civil society. What is essential is that the injured nation shall at least be able to count with certainty on the support of others against the offender. In other words,

morality must remain the law and the offending nation the exception.

Moreover, at every stage of this collective life subordination of private interests to those of the community must be recognized as an inescapable obligation and treated as such. Social life would be impossible if the individual did not subordinate his particular and temporary interests to the more general and permanent interests of the group. The difficulty is to secure from political and social groups what is required of the individual—namely, voluntary subordination to the general and permanent interests of humanity. Obstinate partisanship, narrow-minded clannishness, and jingo nationalism are essentially the same as the selfishness of the individual. This renunciation of rivalry and of claims arising from the divergence of immediate interests, this spontaneous surrender to a higher will, this consciousness of permanent contact with and dependence on a higher order of reality extending by stages to embrace the broadest of all concepts, is what Socrates and Plato meant by wisdom and what a Christian thinker like Pascal called humility. But humility of this kind should be a source of strength, and then men should be proud to feel it. In the past men felt that it implied faith and obedience. We must see that it leads to faith and action.

Can it be a Socialist who is putting forward this view? Indeed it can, and one, moreover, who flatters himself that he is

being perfectly consistent. The aim of Socialism is to set up a universal society founded on equal justice for all men and on equal peace for all nations. Many means must work together to this end, but no Socialist worthy of the name would claim that the end could be achieved unless human personality is perfected, enriched, and deepened in the process, or unless the spirit of discipline and sacrifice is continually developed and more widely spread. Socialism has never denied either "moral" or "spiritual" values and has never repudiated either the sentiment of virtue or that of honor. All that it has done, like Christianity before it, is to interpret these concepts differently.

Socialism has often been reproached for attracting only the unfortunate multitudes by holding out to them the prospect of what Renan in the last century called "the satisfaction of their purely material needs" and of what today we call "*jouissances*." The suppression of poverty, of the scourges of cold, hunger, and disease, are not "purely material ends." What is there about belief in social justice that could make it more materialist than belief in charity? When a worker demands better wages, he is not thinking of piling his table a little higher with food, but only of a larger and healthier home, of better-clad and better-educated children. Life, family, home, the healthy growth of children, and security in old age are not "material" preoccupations. All the same, if Socialism had restricted itself to demands like these, noble and selfish at the same time, it would not have attracted the mass support it

now has. Socialism teaches its followers that their own individual and selfish needs are inextricably related to those of their fellow-men, that their rights and their liberty are inseparable from the rights and the liberty of others. It teaches men that they can satisfy their own needs only together with those of others, by a common effort on the part of all to create a whole as full, coherent, and harmonious as that which obtains in the physical realms of the universe. Socialist philosophy is therefore inseparable from the most comprehensive of human ideals, the belief in the universality of ordered life and human bonds. Jaurès, for instance, always regarded the concept of humanity as the essential principle of all human progress. It afforded a new basis for virtually immutable moral precepts, as well as for ever changing customs and rights and a new raw material for artists and philosophers. The idea of humanity, like that of God in the Middle Ages, could inform all the different aspects of individual life and all forms of social existence. This "complete Socialism" is in no sense of the word a religion, for it has neither dogma nor rites nor priests, but it does appeal to and satisfy the religious urge in men. It teaches its own concepts of what is good and right, encourages the practice of conscientious scruple, and asks its followers to base their conduct on ideals that transcend the sphere of the individual and are their own reward, and it can do so because the assent it receives comes near to the kind of religious faith

to which the sacrifice of individual interest is normal and legitimate.

How is it that Socialism has been so misunderstood? How have fair-minded people come so to depreciate ideas that millions of people throughout the world cultivated in their own hearts as the highest of human aspirations? I have already tried to show the extent to which we Socialists must ourselves be held responsible for this misconception which does us so much harm, but I think I can explain in a few words the real reason for the mistake. The development of great human ideas, and even of religions, is influenced as much by the resistance they encounter as by the nature of their own initial impetus. Socialism had first to survive, then to make a niche for itself and to make its way; in order to establish its right to live, it had first to criticize its opponents, and, to protect its early achievements, it had to struggle. Capitalist society, misled by the instinct of self-preservation, treated Socialism as an implacable enemy with which no compromise was possible and which must be overthrown and destroyed without mercy. Attack was held to be the best form of self-defense, and so the pulpit gave way to the battlefield, and battles inevitably call forth all man's most primitive instincts, including fear—on both sides—greed, and intolerance.

This polemical phase now belongs to the past. Socialism can move from the militant to the victorious period. The so-

cial system which it attacked and by which it was in turn attacked is now falling into ruin, and even where it still survives does so without belief in itself and in contradiction with its own laws. The men and parties who have most bitterly opposed Socialist assumptions and axioms have now taken them over for their own purposes. Today, whether consciously or not, society is being reconstituted everywhere on principles laid down by the Socialists. Even the Catholic Church, although it has never withdrawn its condemnation of the principles of Socialism, has, in the course of the last fifty years, adopted points of view, particularly on the problems of labor and property, that take it along a road parallel with ours and perhaps even converging with ours, in a way that at least rules out all real incompatibility. In such a situation polemics are almost pointless and conflict baseless. The task of the Socialist movement is now only one of preaching and conversion. Like the Church in those periods of history when its temporal interests dangerously obscured the real purpose for which it existed, it must now rediscover the purity of its initial inspiration.

Does that mean that religious propaganda is one of the tasks of Socialism? In a sense it does. Spinoza said, "If we have a concept of God, every action that falls within our control must be based on our religion." If for what Spinoza calls "the concept of God," we substitute the concept of Humanity, of all mankind, of the universe seen as a whole, the statement remains

true. There is no doubt that in this form it corresponds to the peculiar genius of France, whose people have, throughout their history, from the Crusades to the French Revolution, held that human solidarity and a desire for universalism constituted the highest form of patriotism. This is what men and nations must teach—I am almost tempted to say preach—if they are to be worthy of their historic mission. The aim of their mutual efforts must be to improve man and society, to stimulate and encourage man's potentialities for good, so that he can make his personal contribution toward the creation of the best possible society. Now is the time to undertake these great tasks, when the ground has been prepared by the political crisis which shook Europe before the war, by the war itself, and by defeat. Hemmed round as we are by day-to-day responsibilities and anxieties, we are never optimistic enough in our outlook, for optimism in world affairs demands appreciation and understanding of the time factor. Who can be sure that a century or two hence, when philosophers can regard the events of our time with complete detachment, they will not conclude that even Nazism and Fascism had some share in the providential march of progress?

Only a short time ago I reread a work of Renan, published only a few months before the war of 1870, in which he foretold and seemed to hope for an outbreak of those barbarian forces that he regarded as a kind of latent residue, a dynamic vitality, that humanity holds perpetually in reserve. If, he says,

these barbarian forces are released, more than that, if they spread widely over highly civilized countries at a time when their vitality is temporarily exhausted, then the effect may very well be one of stimulation and renewal. The flood passes, the barbarian elements are driven back to their Stygian retreats, but the fertility, the renewal, are none the less real and lasting. I have already explained why I cannot admit that totalitarian barbarism possesses this stimulating and fertilizing virtue. Renan was thinking of possible historical developments of a totally different kind. He was thinking of the tides of youth and freshness that for thousands of years at periodic intervals have submerged the known forms of civilization, of the alluvium spread by the German tribes at the time of the Roman Empire and, in modern times, by the spread of the Slav and even of the Oriental races. But he was not thinking, and could never have thought, of looking upon the destruction of civilization as an ideal, nor of suggesting that one section of civilized humanity might come deliberately to adopt as its own ideal a return to primitive savagery. This kind of development is no river bringing down its fertile mud, but a desert wind that scatters in sterile dust the strata of soil slowly built up through the ages. Some poisons can cure, but others are always fatal. I therefore refuse categorically to apply Renan's argument to totalitarian dictatorships. But let us assume for a moment, even though the assumption is rationally inadmissible, that this barbarian fertilizer has renewed the

productive capacity of an exhausted soil. Let us admit that by some historical accident incomprehensible to contemporary minds the plunder of the soil of Europe by Nazism and Fascism has made it possible for the Socialist way of life to come at last to its full flowering in the lives of all men. What a restitution, what a magnificent revenge that would be! It would point to the existence within the universe of a harmony of design that made the *raison d'être* of the totalitarian dictatorships the ultimate emergence in France of that democratic Socialism which is the living and creative element of international democracy!

In the work of Renan to which I have just referred, after emphasizing the "uniqueness" and "decisiveness" of the French Revolution—which he calls "the glory of France, and most French of all epics"—and after claiming that for centuries "the Revolution will divide men and be one of the pretexts of their loves and hates," Renan goes on to add these strangely prophetic words: "Wherever we find, in the history of a nation, some unique event, its cost is almost always a long period of suffering and sometimes the very eclipse of the nation itself. It was so in the case of Judea, of Greece, of Italy. These nations created something unique, in which the human race itself has found life and profit, but they did so only at a cost of centuries of humiliation and of eclipse as nations. The nations that created religion, art, science, the Empire, the Papacy—all of which are universal rather than national creations—were more

than nations, but they were also, and by virtue of the same fact, less than nations, in the sense that they were the victims of their own achievement." The word expiation has become familiar to us; we are always being told that our country to-day is expiating the Revolution of 1789 and the train of errors that has followed it for more than a century! But these claims are no more than vulgar polemics; Renan, who is a historian and a philosopher, uses the term in a way that makes it both nobler and more just.

What France is expiating, in his view, is not a false or evil work, but one which was too fine, too vast, and, above all, too wide in scope for one nation to accomplish alone, and he sees its consequences as a sacrifice rather than an expiation. A nation which was the first to conceive of and to introduce universal truths sacrifices itself to all mankind in so doing. But Renan held that the consequences of this holocaust would not be as lasting in the case of France as they were in those of Judea, Greece, and Italy, precisely because France's revolutionary achievement was less significant and less "universal." He thought that the expiation for the French Revolution would last throughout the nineteenth century, after which, having paid for her noble recklessness, France would rise again, younger and stronger, just as Germany recovered after the period of political decline which was her way of expiating the Reformation. Renan's calculations were inaccurate; the expiation lasted half a century longer. Today France has re-

covered her former status among nations; now it is her turn to receive the deferred reward for the sacrifice from which the whole of humanity had benefited.

All these reflections must surely combine to justify our confidence, to give us comfort and encouragement, and to convince us that justice will be done. If we should ever be tempted to discouragement in the face of the miseries and evils of our times, then we have only to look beyond the present brief moment of time toward the past and the future; we must learn to see, beyond the little world of our immediate surroundings, the universe that is a harmonious whole. This does not mean that immediate tasks are to be neglected in favor of empty speculation. We are not dreamers; we cannot afford to dream. But this moment will pass, the dictatorships that now hold Europe in their grip will pass, present sufferings and ills will pass, and the eternal truths will remain. There is a human destiny which is linked to the laws of the universe, into which we must write our own brief fate. We are working *in* the present but not *for* the present. How many times in public meetings have I quoted these words of Nietzsche: "Let the future and what it holds in the far distance be your guide today and every day. My advice to you is to love, not just your neighbor today, but those who will come long after you." Why should the human race, or the French people, prove unworthy in the future of all that they have achieved in the past? Wisdom, science, and art are human

creations. Why, then, should the human race be incapable of creating justice, fraternity, and peace? Humanity produced Plato, Homer, Shakespeare, Hugo, Michelangelo, Beethoven, Pascal, and Newton—all human heroes whose genius lay essentially in their contact with essential truths, with the central reality of the universe. Why should humanity not produce guides who can lead us forward toward those forms of social life most in harmony with universal laws? The social system, like the stellar system, must have its laws of attraction and gravitation. Man is not a dual personality, with one side of his nature that sings and learns while the other acts; one that feels beauty and understands truth and another to feel brotherhood and understand justice. Nobody who sees mankind and the universe in this way can fail to be conscious of an invincible hope. Let man only keep his gaze fixed on his goal, let him keep his faith in his destiny, let him not shrink from using the strength that is his, and in times of anxiety and discouragement, let all his thought be for all mankind.













## *Léon Blum*

has been hailed as the leader of all the democratic Socialist forces in the world today. He was premier of France in 1936 and 1937. After imprisonment in two Vichy prisons and attendance at the farcical Riom trials, he was taken by the Nazis to Buchenwald, held as a hostage, and released early in 1945. Meanwhile *For All Mankind* had been widely circulated in liberated France, and translated into German; parts of it had previously been published in the underground press. He was recently Envoy Extraordinary to Washington from the new French government.

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